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BICKERSTETH'S TREATISE

ON

THE LORD'S SUPPER;

ADAPTED TO

THE SERVICES

OF

THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

In the United States.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION, NOTES, AND AN ESSAY

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D. CALDWELL,
Clerk of the Eastern District of Pennsylvania.

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INTRODUCTION.

In consequence of the many and very excellent works which have been published on the subject of the Lord's Supper, the present Treatise may, by some, perhaps, be thought *superfluous;* and its republication in this country entirely *unnecessary.* After giving the view which is entertained in England on the first of these points, I shall feel myself bound to lay before the reader, the reasons which have induced me to disregard the last. The Treatise of Bickersteth is no common work. I look upon it as by far the best of the kind which has for a number of years issued from the press. It has already passed through three large editions in England, and on the cover of one of the latest London periodical publications, I find that a fourth, and that in the octavo form, is now in the press. The following remarks, which are taken from one of the English reviews, will show the estimation in which it is held.

"The sacred ordinance of the Lord's Supper has been considered one of such deep and vital importance in every age of the church, that the treatises which have been written upon its nature, obligation, and advantages, almost exceed the power of recollection and enumeration. The most able, clear, consistent, and spiritual views of the holy communion, are certainly

to be found among the writers of the church of England: and they who wish to see how far a subject can be illustrated by learning the most profound, eloquence the most captivating, and piety the most fervent, will find their wishes amply gratified by a perusal of Bishop Taylor's Worthy Communicant, Bishop Reynolds' Meditation on the Sacrament of our Lord's Last Supper, and many other works which might be mentioned of similar design and execution, by the mighty men of renown, who laid the foundations, or raised the fair superstructure of the English church. A still greater extent and variety of more familiar and practical writings upon the same subject is to be met with among us. Men of every rank and every attainment, have united to elucidate the character, and enforce the demands of this blessed sacrament. Among writers of the more practical class, without the pale of the establishment, should be reckoned the learned, pious, and catholic Matthew Henry, whose excellent work, "The Communicant's Companion," ranks, in our judgment, notwithstanding its occasional quaintness, among the most satisfactory books which have been written upon that ordinance. Of course, such an opinion is subject to the qualification arising from the different modes of celebration in our church, and among those who dissent from her ritual. A Treatise therefore like that which Mr. Bickersteth has published, was perhaps still a desideratum to the members of the established church; and our best thanks are justly due to his care and judgment, in availing himself of the vast collection of materials which was left by former writers at his disposal."

After having, as I trust, shown that the work itself could not be considered as superfluous, I proceed briefly to remark, that its *republication*, cannot be considered as *unnecessary*.

It is a melancholy fact, that in no city of our union are the ordinances of religion more grievously neglected, and thus apparently undervalued, than they are in this. Compare the lists of our communicants, with those of churches in other cities, and the difference is most astonishingly great. This cannot be attributed to a want of faithfulness in the preachers of the Gospel, or to a more than ordinary indifference among the people, to the truths of religion. It may be presumed that the preachers are as faithful here, as elsewhere, and the people just as willing as others; for in all places, they have the same natural enmity of the carnal mind, to oppose itself to the progress of Divine truth. I think the reasons for the astonishing difference which is observable, is to be sought, not in the common circumstances which operate alike in all parts of the world,—carelessness and indifference to the things which make for everlasting peace, but must be ascribed to causes which no where else seem to have so powerful an operation. I am fully persuaded, that this cause is to be found in the amazing influence which is exerted by *the Society of Friends*, the principles of which have, from circumstances peculiar to this city, been more widely extended beyond the pale of their own church, than in any other section of our country. Here, I hope, I may not be misunderstood. The influence of which I speak is *indirect*, arising from the very singular circumstances in which a vast num-

ber of Episcopal families are placed. There is many a family, *all* the members of which were originally Friends, but who have attached themselves to our church, from a variety of causes. There is many a family, the *younger branches* of which, have taken pews in our churches, while the elder are perhaps among the most steady adherents to the way of their fathers.—Now it is evident, both these come with all the prejudices of their education,—prejudices which, on the subject of the ordinances, are peculiarly strong; and unhappily, there is superadded to this, an indisposition to examine the evidences, upon which we rest our firm belief in the importance and obligation of those Divine Institutions:—for, it is very easy to shelter themselves beneath what it is natural for them to suppose the correctness of the views in which they have been educated, and this summary method saves the labour of inquiry.—They forget that it is their duty, to "prove all things, and to hold fast that which is good." Again, there is many a young family which may be said to be in a measure divided on these points, the wife, perhaps, having been brought up a Friend, and the husband, an Episcopalian, or vice versa. Circumstances of this kind induce a species of indifference to all religion; for the individual who marries beyond the pale of the Society of Friends, *loses his caste*, and not being attached to any other denomination particularly, becomes careless and unconcerned. This is the kind of *influence* of which I have been speaking, and a person must be of an understanding extremely obtuse, who cannot readily perceive how pernicious that influence must be to the cause of *re-*

ligion in general. God forbid, that by these remarks, it should be supposed I cast a single imputation on the Society of Friends, in which, I am free to acknowledge, is to be found some of the most estimable characters our city can boast. The *influence* belongs to circumstances over which they have as little control as we; and erroneous as I most unquestionably hold their views, as it regards the sacraments, and fully as I believe that ours can be proved correct, even to demonstration, I would not for the world be supposed to utter a syllable which might be construed into uncharitableness or disrespect.

Believing, then, as I firmly do, that much of the evil of which I have been complaining, arises from this *indirect and unavoidable influence*, I felt justified in the republication of this treatise, in the hope that, under God, it might serve at least to convince the wavering, and perhaps furnish many of those who doubt not, with arguments on the subject; for though this work does not pretend, or rather, I may say, avoids all questions of controversy on this point, it nevertheless, by its mild and yet powerful statements, is calculated to lead the serious mind to conviction.

Another reason for its republication, is one which concerns more particularly the communicants and congregation of my own church. I had been in the habit, in those weekly social meetings to which none but the communicants were invited, to read to them from works which were calculated to impress on their minds the importance of their duties, and the greatness of their responsibilities to God and man. Among these works I read this of Bickersteth, taking only a

chapter at a time; and as mine was the only copy to be had, it was so continually lent from one to another and sought with so much avidity, that for nearly a year I scarcely had it a day in my own possession.—I found that the perusal of it had been sanctified to many, who now, I trust, rejoice in the hope of the glory of God; and with an earnest desire to increase the good, which I was persuaded it was capable of doing, under the blessing of God, I determined to put it to the press. Here was a reason entirely sufficient; and had there been ten thousand similar publications in circulation, I should have thought the experiment I have now ventured, worthy of a trial.

No one who reads but the table of contents, can fail to be persuaded, that the topics on which the work particularly treats, are of the utmost importance; and, in these days, when the most appalling heresies stalk abroad, the chapters on *the atonement* and on *faith in that atonement*, are invaluable. But I must not weary the patience of the reader: I was anxious to give the reasons, which induced me to present to the public an edition of this work, while so many of a similar character, and some of them of great value, are abroad, and easily accessible. If the publication of this shall be the means of turning a single individual, hitherto careless and indifferent, to a more serious way of thinking;—if it shall bring one "weary and heavy laden" penitent, to the table of the Lord, to seek for heavenly consolation—if it shall cheer one pilgrim in his heavenward path, I am, beyond measure, paid for the trouble and labour I have undergone in its preparation,—and to God, who alone can

work the good for which I pray, will be the glory and the praise.

I have attached to the work some few notes of explanation, which the reader will observe as he goes along. One chapter I have been obliged to alter considerably, in order to adapt it to the communion service of the church in this country;—and I have added, in an appendix, an essay on the inconsistency and impropriety of communicants joining in with the common amusements of the world.

Every real lover of the Episcopal Church, and indeed every one who feels anxious for the welfare of immortal souls, will deeply deplore the apparent neglect in which especially the blessed sacrament of the Lord's Supper is held by the generality; and though, for the comfort of those who wish well to the interests of our church and the progress of religion, there is a very great and manifest improvement, yet when we consider the size and respectability of our congregations, it may emphatically be said,—"The ways of Zion do mourn because so few come to her solemn feasts." God forbid that I should wish, or encourage a single individual to come to the table of the Lord, whose heart had not been suitably prepared for it by the Holy Spirit; but I wish to lead men to such views of religious truth, as have the prospect, through the Divine blessing, of bringing them to a proper state of sentiment and feeling. And I do desire that those who, on a serious and prayerful self-examination, "repent them of their sins, and are in love and charity with their neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking

from henceforth in his holy ways"—should "draw near *with faith*, and take the holy Sacraments to their comfort," and their growth in grace, till they are made "meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light," and become "fellow citizens of the saints and of the household of God."

G. T. Bedell.

P. S. In many parts of the following treatise, the passages of Scripture, especially those which are long, are merely referred to. It would be highly advantageous to the reader, invariably to turn to these in his Bible, as it will enable him to observe the confirmation of positions taken, and will serve as a continual mean of edification.

A TREATISE

ON

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

PART I.

DESIGNED TO EXPLAIN THE DOCTRINES AND DUTIES CONNECTED WITH THE HOLY COMMUNION.

A

TREATISE

ON

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

CHAPTER I.

The Appointment of the Lord's Supper.

The circumstances in which the Lord's Supper was first appointed, are full of interest. Let us for a moment place ourselves at Jerusalem, at its first institution, amid the little company gathered round our Lord in the upper chamber. It was a solemn and impressive season. He had just foretold the speedy destruction of their beautiful city, and magnificent temple. He had clearly intimated to them that a scene of sorrow was *at hand:* but when he saw the anxiety which it occasioned, he laboured to support and encourage them. The disciples were deeply affected by the peculiar tenderness both of his discourses and of his conduct. He told them, *With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer: for I say unto you, I will not eat any more thereof, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.* He then washed their feet; and afterwards, *troubled in spirit,* he *testified, one of you shall betray me.* Exceedingly sorrowful, each of them asked, *Lord, is it I?*

A cloud of affliction evidently hung over their heads, and they knew not what was before them. With one exception, they deeply loved their Master, and were determined to give up their all for his sake: but they were most of all troubled at the thoughts of losing the inestimable advantages of his presence, his converse, and his affectionate care and guidance.

In the midst of this lowly and despised company, observe the blessed Saviour. Affecting, indeed, must have been that paschal supper, which contained so lively a resemblance and picture of his own immediate sufferings. But laying aside all considerations for himself, unmindful of his own sorrows, he spent his time in comforting his disciples. "His heart," says one, 'was filled with love to his people; and that love, which carried him to all the darkness and difficulty that he was to go through, moved him to institute the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, for the benefit and advantage of his church." By appointing it at this affecting moment, he made the memorial of his death the more impressive, and increased our obligations to obey the command, *this do, in remembrance of me.*

In order to have distinct and clear views of that important fact of which this institution is the memorial, we must go yet farther back, and briefly retrace the history of God's dealings with man from the beginning.

Originally, man was created pure and holy. Surrounded with every good, and enjoying the favour of God, he dwelt in Eden; but, by disregarding the appointed test of obedience, he fell from that happy state, and became guilty and sinful. As springing from sinful parents, all are sinful, and under the sentence of death. *In Adam all die; by one man's disobedience many were made sinners.*

The extent of this corruption will be seen in the divine declaration, that *the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth;* and in the confession of his most devoted servants, *behold, I was shapen in wickedness, and in sin did my mother conceive me:—I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.*

But *God, who is rich in mercy, for the great love wherewith he loved us,* did not leave man without a hope. He promised a Deliverer, the Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of this deliverer was delayed for 4000 years. By this means all the natural tendencies of the human heart were displayed, and man's inability to work out his own restoration to holiness and happiness was fully proved. Hence the necessity of the redemption by

Jesus Christ, was made manifest; men were prepared to expect some grand fulfilment of the splendid language of prophecy, and the faith of God's servants in his promises, was exercised and proved. But though the coming of our Lord was so long delayed, such clear intimation of his person, character, and work, were given, that no sincere inquirer could mistake the Messiah when at length he appeared.

In order to fulfil his gracious design, it pleased God to set the people of Israel apart from other nations, and to enter into a covenant with them. With this national covenant was interwoven a variety of rites and ceremonies, typical of the promised Redeemer. Among these rites, SACRIFICES (which had been before appointed,) hold a distinguished place. When animals were offered in sacrifice, they were, in pursuance of God's direction, slain before his altar, and offered up to him by the Priest, as an atonement for the sins of the worshipper. Thus "he was reminded, on the one hand, for his humiliation, of the forfeiture of his own life, of the death which he deserved on account of sin; and on the other, for his consolation, of the promised substitution of another in his stead, to bear his sin, to atone for his guilt, and to screen him from its deserved punishment." A lamb was, according to the Mosaic law, slain every morning and every evening. It is with reference to this that our Lord is called *the Lamb, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world.* These sacrifices of the Jewish Church were then figurative of his death for our sins.

The PASSOVER must also be here particularly noticed. It was one of the three principal feasts of the Jews, appointed in remembrance of their deliverance from Egypt. At this feast, a lamb, after it had been presented and slain before the altar, (Deut. xvi. 5,) was roasted with fire, and eaten with unleavened bread.*

* Several learned men have supposed that the Lord's Supper was designed to be similar to the ancient Feasts on Sacrifices. Their general statement on this subject is as follows:—

The Jews were to show their children at this feast, how God had delivered them from Egypt. Exod. xii.

The Jews at the peace offering sacrifices, (Lev. vii. 15—20.) as well as at the passover, were accustomed to feast on the victim that had been offered as a sacrifice, 1 Sam. ix. 13. The Heathen nations also retained the practice of eating a part of the victim which they sacrificed, (Exod. xxxiv. 15; Num. xxv. 2; Psalm cvi. 8.) in order to participate of the propitiation supposed to be effected by the sacrifice. The custom of a feast upon a sacrifice was very general, and the idea was, that all who partook of the feast manifested an approval of the worship, and partook of the benefit of the sacrifice. Hence the Apostles forbid Christians to eat of meats offered to idols, (Acts xvi. 29.) and St. Paul shows the Corinthians how utterly inconsistent it was that they who went to the Lord's table should yet go to the table of idolaters; *ye cannot drink of the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils; ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils.* Hence also St. John speaks strongly and repeatedly against those who eat of the sacrifices offered to idols. Rev. ii. 14. 20. Many think that in the institution of the Lord's Supper, our Lord therefore availed himself of this ancient and general practice, in order by analogy to impress more forcibly on the minds of his disciples the nature of his death as a sacrifice, the necessity of an interest in it, and the duty of professing before others our faith in his blood. For a farther illustration of this view, the reader is referred to Cudworth, Waterland, Pelling, Warburton, Cleaver, Knox, A. Clarke, Card, and others who have written at large on this point.

But the writer, after considering what has been written on this subject, seriously hesitates in adopting this view, on these grounds. We do not eat of the victim itself. What we do is in remembrance of him who was the victim. The sacrifice for sin is the principal point commemorated, and the Jewish sacrifice for sin was not to be eaten. The notion does not necessarily flow either from the Apostle's statement in the Epistle to the Corinthians, or our Lord's words in the appointment. For these reasons the writer cannot but think that those who make the Lord's Supper a feast on a sacrifice, go farther than the scriptures bear them out—they have formed an ingenious analogy to the sentiments and rites of antiquity in many particulars; but they do not appear to him to have satisfactorily proved that it was our Lord's intention that this ordinance should be of a similar

26; xiii. 8. The way in which the Jews observed the Passover, will illustrate some particulars in the appointment of the Lord's Supper. After they had used great diligence in putting away all the leavened bread from their houses, at the time of eating the Passover, they were accustomed to take a piece of the unleavened bread, and bless, break it, and distribute it to those assembled. They drank wine together out of several distinct vessels, with grateful acknowledgments of God's goodness to them, declaring at this time the things which he had done for Israel. The whole was concluded with a hymn of praise. It is obvious how similar several of the rites observed at the Passover, were to those adopted in the Lord's Supper.

We will only notice farther with respect to the Jewish Dispensation, THE RATIFICATION of it. The covenant made at Mount Sinai was ratified by the sprinkling of blood. After the victim had been sacrificed unto the Lord, we read, *Moses took half of the blood, and put in basons, and half of the blood he sprinkled on the altar. And he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people, and they said, All that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient. And Moses took the blood and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words.* Exod. xxiv; Heb. ix. 19, 20. Such was the introduction of that large and grand system of typical atonements, which continued in force till He appeared who *put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.* Heb. ix. 26.

Let us now view the appointment of the Lord's Supper. It was at the feast of the Passover, and, as is generally supposed, immediately after partaking of it, and probably in the way that has been described, that our Lord instituted this ordinance, to be a constant me-

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nature to the ancient feasts on a sacrifice. Nor is such a view by any means necessary in order to rescue this Institution from the statement, given by some, of its being a mere memorial, unattended with special benefits; as the subsequent part of this Treatise will sufficiently show.

morial of his atonement for sin, and of his ratification of a better covenant by his own death.

The true Paschal Lamb, even Jesus Christ, being about to be offered up as a sacrifice for our sins, the type and shadow, now that the antitype and substance were come, were no longer to be used. The slaying of the lamb was therefore to be relinquished, and instead of the Paschal Feast of remembrance, the feast of the Lord's Supper was appointed. One was instituted the night before the deliverance from Egypt, the other the night before our deliverance from our iniquities. One commemorated redemption from Egyptian bondage, the other, a better redemption from the bondage of sin. One prefigured, by shedding of blood, the redemption of Christ; the other would exhibit, by striking emblems, a redemption already accomplished. By this new ordinance our Lord told his disciples, the Jewish Dispensation was passing away, and the Christian, clearer and fuller in its light, and richer in its blessings, was established in its place.

With this information, the words recording the appointment of this ordinance will be more easily understood. We have an account of them in four different parts of the New Testament. Matt. xxvi. 26—30; Mark xiv. 22—26; Luke xxii. 18—20; 1 Cor. xi. 23—25. As they in some measure vary, the whole are here given.

Matt. xxvi.	Mark xiv.	Luke xxii.	1 Cor. xi.
(26.) And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.	(22.) And as they did eat, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.	(19.) And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.	(23.) The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread. (24.) And when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body which is broken for you: this do, in remembrance of me.
(27.) And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of it. (28.) For this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.	(23.) And he took the cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them: and they all drank of it. (24.) And he said unto them, This is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many.	(20.) Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood which is shed for you.	(25.) After the same manner he also took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.
(29.) But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.	(25.) Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God.	(18.) For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.	
(30.) And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.	(26.) And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.		

These different passages have been put together in a harmony as follows:

The Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was

betrayed, as they were eating, took bread; and when he had blessed it, and given thanks, he brake it, and gave it to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body which is given and broken for you; this do, in remembrance of me.

And, after the same manner, he also took the cup, after supper; and gave thanks, and gave it to them; saying, Drink ye all of it; and they all drank of it, and he said unto them, This is my blood of the New Testament, and this cup is the New Testament in my blood, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins. This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I shall drink it new with you in the kingdom of my Father, in the kingdom of God. And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.

It is evident that there are several expressions here used which require to be duly understood, before we can intelligently observe this ordinance. Why are bread and wine to be used on this occasion? In what sense was the bread our Saviour's body? how was the cup his blood? What is the meaning of his body given and broken; and his blood shed for us? Why are we to eat this bread and drink of this cup? What is the nature of the New Testament? In what views are we to remember Christ, and what is the necessity and benefit of so doing? The consideration of some of these particulars will properly come in this chapter; but others of them which relate more directly to the great doctrines of the Gospel, will require more full discussion in distinct chapters.

Do you ask, WHY BREAD WAS APPOINTED TO BE USED?—We reply, it was not only at hand when our Lord appointed the institution, but it is a most significant emblem of that which it was intended to represent. It is so not merely in the mode of its preparation for our use, but as, when prepared, it is the ordinary support of man, the most common, necessary, and wholesome kind of food. What then can better represent

that incarnate, suffering, and dying Saviour, who is the food of our souls?

Do you ask, WHY WINE WAS APPOINTED?—We reply, this also was not only at hand, but the preparation of wine is likewise a significant emblem of our Saviour's sufferings. Wine, too, is in its properties strengthening and exhilirating; *give wine unto those that be of heavy hearts*, (in the margin, *bitter of soul*, Prov. xxxi. 6.) It is *wine that maketh glad* such hearts. Psalm cxiv. 15. And in this view, wine is an apt figure of that blood of Christ, which being forced from his bruised body, and shed for our sins, is suited to revive and comfort the fainting spirit of man.*

Do you ask, WHY ARE BOTH BREAD AND WINE APPOINTED?—Various reasons may be given for this. Some have thought that the thing may be doubled to

* The direction to drink *wine*, as representing the blood of Christ, seems contrary to the analogy of the Jewish Dispensation, where both people and priests were forbidden to taste the blood in any case; nor were the priests even permitted to eat the flesh of the sin offering. Some have supposed that our Lord designed to point out the nearer communion which we have with God, and the clearer discoveries of the way of pardon through the Gospel. "We have," says Bishop Patrick, "such a token and pledge of forgiveness by this sacrifice, as the ancient people of God had not, of forgiveness of their offences by the blood that was offered at their altar." Heb. xiii. 10. Perhaps however, it might serve to intimate more strongly, as it doubtless would, by its being contrary to the current of all their prejudices, that Christ actually *poured out his soul unto death*, in giving his blood; it may also show that the words of our Lord in this ordinance, will not bear, in any view, a literal interpretation. The peculiar direction that *all* should drink of it, and the assurance that *all* did drink, is observable in connection with the practice of the Roman Catholics to deny the cup to the laity. Nor does the propriety of that practice appear from the assertion sometimes made, that "all then present were ministers;" for, not to say that the disciples could at that time be only considered as believers in general, such a view of the matter would prove too much; it would go to show that the laity should be denied the bread as well as the wine.

show the certainty and importance of it. Gen. xli. 32. But there are other more forcible reasons. The separation of the blood from the body marks more strongly the death of the victim as a sacrifice. The blood was considered in a peculiar way to be the life of every living creature, and that which made *an atonement for the soul.* Lev. xvii. 11. Again, it is said, (ver. 14.) with marked emphasis, *It is the life of all flesh; the blood of it is for the life thereof; therefore I said unto the children of Israel, ye shall eat the blood of no manner of flesh; for the life of all flesh is the blood thereof: whosoever eateth it shall be cut off.* In the appointment, therefore, of the blood as distinct from the body, there was another strong intimation, that our Saviour gives his life for us—that his soul *was made an offering for sin.* The Jews could not hear the command, *This is my blood, drink ye all of it,* without thinking of his life being offered up for ours. The broken bread was very descriptive of our Saviour's humiliation, but does not afford that complete and striking emblem of his death, which, under these circumstances, wine poured out, the figure of his blood shed, does. Besides, as meat and drink are both necessary to nourish us, so the two figures, of the body and blood, seem given to show us that there is in Christ Jesus a complete nourishment for the soul, and that we need only look to him for every part of our salvation. To omit either bread or wine is to depart from that primitive institution, on which the whole authority of this ordinance rests.

We have now to explain IN WHAT SENSE THE BREAD WAS OUR SAVIOUR'S BODY, AND THE CUP HIS BLOOD. The previous remarks will have prepared the way for a right understanding of these words. Let us remember, also, the general nature of expressions used in the appointment of divine ordinances. Of circumcision it is said, *This is my covenant,* (Gen. xvii. 18.) though it was only the token of the covenant. Of eating the Paschal Lamb, it is said, *It is the Lord's Passover,* (Exod. xii. 11.) though it was only the sign of his passing over the Israelites. St. Paul calls the

manna *spiritual meat*, and the water that flowed from the rock *spiritual drink*, and says *that rock was Christ.* 1 Cor. x. 3, 4. So Christ is called *our Passover.* 1 Cor. v. 7. Amid these obvious figures in similar circumstances, there can be no difficulty with an unbiassed mind, as to the true interpretation of these words. The disciples do not appear to have seen any obscurity in them, nor to have asked our Lord to explain them. They had before been reproved for a literal interpretation of our Lord's direction, *take heed, and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.* Matt. xvi. 6—9; Mark viii. 15—21. They had seen how the Jews had erred at Capernaum, (John vi. 52.) though literally interpreting similar expressions to those under consideration, at which time our Lord told them, *the words that I speak unto you they are spirit and they are life.* John vi. 63. And when our Lord instituted this ordinance, they were not in the least danger of imagining the bread and wine to be the actual body and blood of the Saviour, because he was then conversing with them. From these considerations it is evident that the declarations of our Lord on this occasion, by no means require an interpretation, so altogether remote from common sense and experience, as either the transubstantiation of the Roman Catholic, or the consubstantiation of the Lutherans.* Had our Lord meant that any constant

* These terms, *transubstantiation*, and *consubstantiation*, though they may be understood by the great majority of the readers of this work, are not probably understood by all, and it is therefore hoped that a definition of them may not be considered out of place, or unimportant. By *transubstantiation*, is meant that immediately on the act of consecration, the elements of bread and wine, become actually the *body and blood of Christ*, so as no longer to be bread and wine It is easy for any one, who will calmly reflect on the subject, to see the monstrous absurdity of this dogma of the Roman Catholic church. It is attempted to defend this doctrine, upon the principle that it is a great mystery; and I once heard Bishop England remark, that the miracle is still more extraordinary, because that while to the senses

miracle of such kind was to be performed by his ministers, and believed by his people, how different

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there appears nothing but bread and wine, there was in fact and essence, no bread and wine present, but the real body and blood of Christ. A mystery, as correctly understood, is something which transcends the limited powers of reason, but which has nothing in it contrary to reason. In the doctrine of transubstantiation, however, there is a palpable contradiction; for the evidence of our senses cannot mislead us as to the reality of the thing submitted to examination. If the consecrated bread appears like bread, feels like bread, smells like bread, and tastes like bread, it is utterly impossible to conceive that it should all the while be real flesh and blood, of which, to the senses, it has not one appearance or attribute.—One great error of this kind generally paves the way for another equally or still more monstrous. On the idea that the consecrated wafer is the real body and blood of Christ, is founded the denial of the cup to the laity; for the wafer being changed into the body of Christ, and the body being composed of flesh and blood, so whoever eats the wafer, does of necessity eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God. Thus much for the absurd and most unaccountable doctrine of transubstantiation with its concomitant.

Consubstantiation, a kindred doctrine, was held by many of the early Lutherans. I do not know that it is held by the modern Lutherans, and though I am not prepared to say, I am rather of opinion that it is not, but that they agree in sentiment with our own church. There is some doubt however on this point. The doctrine does not vary very materially from transubstantiation when critically examined; and there seems to be rather a nominal distinction between the terms than a real difference. By consubstantiation is to be understood, that after the consecration of the elements, the body and blood of Christ are *really present*, though the bread and the wine remain the same in their nature and qualities.

In contradistinction to these erroneous opinions, our church holds the doctrine that the bread and the wine are simply the emblems or symbols of the body and blood of Christ, and the 28th article declares, that "the body of Christ is given, taken, and eaten in the supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the body of Christ is received and eaten in the Supper is faith."—G. T. B.

would have been his expressions! The words are not, "This is now, and will be ever hereafter, when you meet together, my transubstantiated and real body,"—or, "let it now and ever hereafter be changed into my body,"—but merely, "*this is my body.*" As he said, "*I am the true vine*," "*I am the door*," meaning they were a figure of him: so the bread was the emblem, figure, or token of our Saviour's body, and the wine of his blood. Just as in seeing a bust of the king, we should say, "This is the king!" so does our Saviour say, "*This is my body!*" There was a peculiar propriety in the expression which he made use of, when we consider the institution as appointed in remembrance of his sacrifice, and as declaring the establishment of a new covenant, ratified as the old had been, by the shedding of blood. This will be more fully pointed out in the subsequent chapter.

The expression used in giving the cup, *this is my blood*, must be interpreted as a figurative expression. The cup manifestly denotes the wine in the cup, and that wine was the figure of our Saviour's blood. And one admitted figure surely ought to make those who would be disposed to insist on a literal interpretation hesitate in their statements.

But when the writer remembers how the most eminent servants of God have contended with each other on this subject, he cannot but add an earnest desire that it might please God that all who love our Saviour in sincerity, might learn to lay aside fierce disputes about that appointment, which is peculiarly calculated, when rightly viewed, to fill our hearts with love to him, and love to each other; and that all his people desiring in simplicity of heart to believe what he has declared, and to practise what he commands, might ever seek to edify each other in love.

Having in this chapter explained several of the expressions in the appointment of the Lord's Supper, we shall proceed to consider in subsequent chapters, more at large, those important doctrines directly connected with it.

CHAPTER II.

The Atonement made by the Death of Christ.

In the preceding chapter we have seen, that in instituting the Lord's Supper, our Saviour stated, that his *body* was *given* and *broken* for his disciples, and his *blood* was *shed for* them, and *for many, for the remission of sins.*

There is an evident reference in these words, to the sacrifices of the law of Moses, which were figurative of the one great sacrifice of Christ. The epistle to the Hebrews shows this sufficiently. A body broken, and blood shed for the remission of sins, exhibit the meaning and intent of the Mosaic sacrifices.

Those sacrifices, and that of Christ, are thus contrasted in the Hebrews, (ix. 11.) *But Christ being come an High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building; neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your consciences from dead works, to serve the living God?*

Indeed the blood of the sacrifice was in the law of Moses so indispensable to the pardon of sin, that we are assured, *without shedding of blood is no remission.* Heb. ix. 22. The reason is given in Lev. xvii. 11. *For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that maketh atonement for the soul.*

The word *atonement*, in our language, signifies *agreement;* or the means by which agreement or reconciliation is made. The general meaning of the original Hebrew word is, *to hide*, or *cover*. When it

refers to sin, it means sin forgiven, remitted, or expiated, through the legal rite appointed for that purpose.*

The Levitical atonement, in all cases, produced the effect of fitting for the divine service. Where moral character was concerned, (which in one view was the case, even when atonement was made for the holy place, &c. for they were unclean through the transgressions of the people, Lev. xvi. 16—19., the atonement was an act of propitiation, being the appointed way for making the Divine Being propitious and favourable to his people. So that atonement and reconciliation, or forgiveness, were thus intimately connected.

By the atonement made by the death of Christ, we mean, then, that the sufferings and death of our Lord were accepted as a sacrifice for sin, in regard to which God forgives our iniquities.

Were there no other proofs of this doctrine than those expressions used in the appointment of the Lord's Supper, they would establish it. But it has pleased God to express so important a truth in a great variety of ways.

Before we quote additional proofs of this great doctrine, let us briefly notice the dignity of the victim who gave himself up as a sacrifice. *God was manifest in the flesh;* He who is *over all, God blessed for ever; Jehovah our righteousness;* the *Mighty God;* the *Everlasting Father;* the *Alpha and Omega;* the *beginning and the ending, which is, and which was, and which is to come;* He *was made flesh and dwelt among us.* By this mysterious and incomprehensible union of the divine and human natures in the person of our Lord, an infinite value was given to his sufferings and death, so that *his blood cleanseth from all sin; he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.* It is this view alone which speaks peace to the troubled conscience. When

* See Magee on the Atonement, and Wardlaw on the Socinian Controversy.

a man is truly awakened to a sense of the multitude and the magnitude of his transgressions, the infinite majesty of Him against whom he has offended, and the true desert and tremendous consequences of his sins, he then feels the value of an atonement made by one who is God as well as man, and rejoices in it as that which can alone be a sufficient satisfaction for his guilt.

What then do the Scriptures say of the sufferings and death of the divine Redeemer? In the Old Testament we find various testimonies to his atonement. Thus in the 53d of Isaiah, we read,—*The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all—He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed.—When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed.* He was foretold by Daniel, as *the Messiah to be cut off, but not for himself.* The appointed period of his coming was fixed, *to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity.* The New Testament language is still more express and decisive—*The Son of Man came to give his life a ransom for many.* Matt. xx. 28. *He died for the ungodly.* Rom. v. 6. God hath *made him to be sin* (a sin offering) *for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.* 2 Cor. v. 21. *He gave himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God.* Eph. v. 2. *He has reconciled both* (Jew and Gentile) *unto God, in one body by the cross.* Eph. ii. 16. *Who, his own self, bare our sins in his own body on the tree.* 1 Pet. ii. 24.

These are but a brief selection of passages which show that the all-important truth of an atonement for sin, made by the Son of God, is confirmed by a great variety of expression, and by repeated testimonies and declarations. How very different would have been the mode of expression, had Christ merely died as an example, and pattern of patience, and long-suffering! How easy and natural would it have been for all the sacred writers to have used another phraseology, had they designed to convey any other instruction than

that which is obvious at the first glance, to every simple and humble mind! The doctrine of the atonement will from such passages be manifest to those who read the Scriptures with an unbiassed and unprejudiced mind!

The great design of this atonement is clearly and fully expressed by St. Paul, in the 3d of Romans. After having shown the universal sinfulness and guilt of man, he goes on to declare the way of acceptance with the holy and righteous God in these words—"Being justified freely by his grace, through the redemption that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: to declare, I say, at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus."

We may observe in this passage, that the apostle notices two leading effects connected with and resulting from the atonement of Christ. It illustrates the divine perfections, and at the same time brings salvation to the guilty.

It ILLUSTRATES THE DIVINE PERFECTIONS. The doctrine of Christ's propitiation is the solution of an apparently inexplicable difficulty. The holy and righteous God who had asserted that he would *not acquit the guilty*, and who had declared, he *that justifieth the wicked, and he that condemneth the just, even they both are an abomination to the Lord*, had yet for 4000 years been pardoning and blessing sinful man, and was then dispensing pardon to believers through the world. This procedure the apostle shows is consistent with the justice of God, and the truth of his word, by the death of Christ being an atonement for sin. The strictness, purity, and excellence of God's holy law are fully manifested, his authority is preserved, the ends of justice are obtained even in a more impressive way by the incarnation, sufferings, and death of the divine substitute, than they would have been merely by the punishment of the guilty creature.

While the mercy of God is fully displayed, his abhorrence of sin is at the same time manifested in the strongest way Dr. Wardlaw has well expressed this. Speaking of the substitution of Immanuel as a voluntary surety, to bear the curse of the law in the room of the guilty, he says, "In this substitution we see displayed in a manner unutterably affecting and awful, the *holy purity* of the divine nature, for no testimony can be conceived more impressive of infinite abhorrence of sin than the sufferings and death of the Son of God. Here, too, we behold the *immutable justice* of the divine government, inflicting the righteous penalty of a violated law. It is to be considered as a fixed principle of the Divine Government, that sin must be punished, that if the sinner be pardoned it must be in a way that marks and publishes the evil of his offence. This is also effected by substitution, and, as far as we can judge, could not be effected in any other way. In inflicting the sentence against transgression on the voluntary and all-sufficient Surety, Jehovah, while he clears the sinner, does not clear his sins. Although clothed with the thunders of vindictive justice against transgression, he wears to the transgressor the smile of reconciliation and peace: he dispenses the blessings of mercy from the throne of his holiness; and, while exercising grace to the guilty, he appears in the characters, equally lovely and venerable, of

> ——————The sinner's friend
> And sin's eternal foe.

"In this way then all the ends of public justice are fully answered. The law retains its complete and unmitigated perfection, *is magnified and made honourable*, the dignity and authority of the Divine Government are maintained and even elevated—all the perfections of Deity are gloriously illustrated and exhibited in sublime harmony. Such a view of the Divine Being is presented on the cross as is precisely calculated to inspire and maintain (to maintain too with a power which will increase its influence the more

closely and seriously the view is contemplated) the two great principles of a holy life, the LOVE and the FEAR of God, filial attachment, freedom, and confidence, combined with humble reverence and holy dread."

The importance of the subject, and the justice and excellence of Dr. Wardlaw's remarks, will justify the length of the quotation.

We may observe also that salvation is thus become, as it respects Christ and those for whom he died, an act of divine justice as well as divine mercy. God, as he is a just God, does not condemn believers, since Christ has borne the punishment of their sins, and purchased them for himself. Blessed be God, our pardon and acceptance in Christ Jesus, is now built on that very attribute which is so dreadful and alarming to the offending sinner! That which seemed the main bar against our acceptance, is now become the very ground why God accepts. Justice and mercy both triumph together. God remains righteous, and yet rebellious man may be for ever blessed.

Thus the cross of Christ gives the brightest display of all the divine perfections. It is a glass in which all created intelligences may see and discover, in a way that they never otherwise could, the glory of God's wisdom, power, righteousness, justice, mercy, and truth.

While God is glorified, through the same atonement, A WAY OF SALVATION IS PROVIDED FOR SINNERS. We shall have occasion, in considering afterwards the nature of the New Covenant, to enter into a fuller view of the nature of this salvation, and therefore will here only briefly notice some of the more direct blessings which are obtained by this atonement.

There is, first, FORGIVENESS. "We have redemption through the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace." The apostle, in the passage in Romans above referred to, also shows that God *is* righteous, in the *remission of sins that are past*. As if he had said, the sins committed before the coming of Christ, were, through the

infinite compassion of God, forgiven on account of the propitiation that was to be effected by his death. All the sin of man, therefore, that ever was, or will be forgiven, was forgiven through his atoning sacrifice. God's exacting the punishment of sin in the death of Christ, explained the mystery of divine patience and truth, in not punishing our first parents, Adam and Eve, with instant death, and in bearing, for so many thousand years, with the wickedness of mankind; and it cleared the divine righteousness, and accounted for his forbearance with the rebellion and sin of his creatures. The same atonement is still amply sufficient to cover the whole of our transgressions against the divine law. The pardon of sin, of all sin, of the greatest and most aggravated sins, the free and entire removal of the load of guilt from the conscience, this is the glory of the Gospel of Christ.

The benefit of the atonement of Christ is also exhibited in another light as the cause of the free JUSTIFICATION of the believer. His sins are not only pardoned, but he is freed from the penalty of sin. *Being justified freely by his grace*, is the great blessing which the apostle grounds on Christ's propitiation. By this redemption of Christ, a way is provided for the guilty sinner being accounted and dealt with as altogether righteous. God, whose judgment is according to truth, whose sentence is final and decisive, is *the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.*

Nor can we also forbear noticing SANCTIFICATION, as another effect connected with the atonement. It is, as we have seen, peculiarly calculated to promote genuine love to God and man. "Ye are bought with a price; therefore, glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are his—If God so loved us, we ought also to love one another." His unspeakable love furnishes the most powerful and attractive motive to obedience; and adds new force to every other consideration which called on us to obey the will of God.

Let us farther observe, how we PARTAKE OF THE BLESSINGS OF THE ATONEMENT: for in vain, as to our salvation, has Christ shed his precious blood and glori-

fied God, and procured blessings for man, if we are not *partakers of the benefit*. On this important point, the Scriptures are very express. It is *through faith in his blood* that God is propitious to us. God justifies *him that believeth in Jesus*. Rom. iii. 25, 26. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." Rom. iv. 5. Similar passages are very numerous. The nature of faith will be considered more at large in the following chapter.

We would now press on the reader's attention the importance of the subject. It is not a matter of mere speculation and theory, but a principal, a practical, and a most cheering truth, revealed for our unspeakable benefit. The subject is of infinite magnitude. It is God's appointed plan of salvation: it is his only plan: "there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." Surely nothing can be conceived of more immense moment to the human race, than that which concerns the salvation of innumerable millions of immortal souls, their peace and holiness here, their deliverance from eternal wo, and their obtaining eternal life. O that every reader may so seek an interest in this salvation, as to enjoy its blessings, and to feel in his own happy experience, what an animating motive the atoning death of Christ is to a life of holiness and devotedness to that God who so loved us, that *he spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all*. We cannot speak of this great subject merely in the language of cold statement. Christian reader! let our hearts magnify and praise the Lord. *The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad*. Let our songs ascend up to his throne. Let us join the heavenly host in their never-ceasing hymn—"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing."

The view which has thus been given of the death of Christ appeared needful to enable us to form right conceptions of the Lord's Supper. In this view of his death, well might a solemn ordinance be appointed,

for its perpetual exhibition, and commemoration.* Dr. Doddridge justly remarks, "I apprehend this ordinance of the Eucharist to have so plain a reference to the atonement or satisfaction of Christ, and to do so solemn an honour to the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, that I cannot but believe that while this sacred institution continues in the Church, (as it will undoubtedly do to the end of the world) it will be impossible to root that doctrine out of the minds of plain humble Christians."

As you have seen, the very words appointing the ordinance bring before us the doctrine of the atonement, by telling us of Christ's body given and broken for us, and his blood shed for the remission of our sins.

We shall farther see, in the next chapter, how we participate in the atonement of Christ.

CHAPTER III.

On faith in Christ's Atonement.

THE Lord's Supper is manifestly an Institution designed only for Christians, for sincere believers in Jesus Christ. It is well known that the primitive

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* How dreadfully the Socinians would pervert this ordinance, may be seen in the following extract from one of their writers. "If the Unitarian Society, on their English Anniversary Festival, were to consecrate the first goblet to the immortal memory of the great founder of their faith, they would more faithfully copy the spirit of this Institution, than any rival creedsman, and would accomplish the association of religion with the national and habitual pleasures of mankind." Dr. Gregory on this makes the following observation. "This attempt at transmuting the orgies of Bacchus into a Christian rite will not succeed with those who have beheld by faith *the Lamb of God that taketh away the sins of the world.*"

churches were very particular in exercising a strict discipline, to keep the unbelieving from that holy table. Indeed, our attendance there without faith in Him, would be a mere act of hypocrisy.

Hence it becomes important for us to understand the nature of faith. The idea is in itself so simple, as rather to be obscured than elucidated by definition. Faith in God's word is the same as faith in man's word, a sure belief of what is said. True faith is a practical belief of the word of God, and especially the record which it hath given of his Son. "If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater—he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son."

The Holy Scriptures illustrate the nature and effects of this faith in a variety of ways, describing it as a coming to Christ, looking unto him, receiving him, putting him on, trusting in him, living upon him, and the like. These figures very strikingly exhibit the inward workings of the believer's heart.

Repentance and faith are most intimately connected in the holy Scriptures. Matt. xxi. 32; Mark i. 15; Acts xx. 21. There is no repentance without faith, and no lively faith without repentance. It has been observed, that repentance and faith are only two branches of the same vital root of *the new creature in Christ Jesus.*

The object in this chapter is not, however, to explain the nature of faith in general, or faith in Christ, (which is a believing all that the Scriptures say of him as a divine Saviour, and so receiving him in all his offices, as our Prophet, Priest, and King,) but to bring before the reader the nature and importance of *faith in his blood.* Rom. iii. 25. There is in the Lord's Supper, when duly received, a special act of faith in the atonement of Christ. This is a point of the utmost importance, as it regards our individual salvation.—Our holiness too, and our comfort, as well as our duly partaking of this ordinance, are closely connected with right views on this subject.

There are some expressions in a discourse recorded

in the 6th of John,* which have often been referred to the Lord's Supper, and which will assist us to understand the nature of this faith. The circumstances of that discourse were these. The miracle of feeding the multitude with bread, and their thence following our Lord, having led him to exhort them to *labour for the meat which endureth to everlasting life*, they asked him, *What shall we do that we might work the works of God?* His reply was, *This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent.* The Jews ask for a proof of his mission, and tell him of the manna which Moses had given. This leads our Lord to show them a better food—"I am the bread of life; he that cometh to me shall never hunger, and he that believeth on me shall never thirst." He farther explains himself, when he says, "the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world." The Jews are stumbled at this; but our Lord only the more solemnly asserts, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed."

To prevent any misunderstanding of these words, by giving them a mere literal interpretation, our Lord afterwards told his disciples, "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing; the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit and they are life."

The great subject inculcated in this discourse, is such a faith in Christ as leads the soul to rely on his giving his flesh for the life of the world. The discourse does not directly refer to the Lord's Supper; for there is not in the whole statement the slightest mention or hint of that appointment, nor could his hearers have

* It is observable, that this Evangelist, who omits the mention of the appointment of the external ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, dwells most at large on the spiritual import of these ordinances; regeneration by the Holy Spirit, and faith in the atonement of Christ.

had any clear understanding of his words, if he were supposed to be speaking of an ordinance never appointed, nor even intimated before. In such a case, would not our Lord's words have wanted that distinctness and precision which usually characterises his discourses?

Our Lord here takes occasion, from what had previously passed, to illustrate the nature of faith in him, by food received for the support of the body. By *the flesh of the Son of man*, and *his blood*, he means his becoming man, and dying for us; (Heb. ii. 14.) by his flesh being given *for the life of the world*, he points out the atonement which he would by his death make for mankind; and by *eating* that flesh, and *drinking* that blood, he shows how we partake of this blessing. Faith is to the mind, what partaking of food is to the animal frame. We know that before food can nourish us, it must be received, eaten, and digested; and so before any sentiments or statements can benefit us, we must believe them and dwell upon them; or, (as in the same allusion the Church Collect expresses it,) we must "inwardly digest them." The truths of Scripture, and the doctrines of salvation by Jesus Christ, can only influence us, and produce in us corresponding affections as they are received; as they are credited and thought upon.

Thus the doctrine of the atonement may be known in a general way; we may be able to state it accurately, and prove it strongly, without our being influenced by it, or having any interest in it; in order to obtain the blessing ourselves, we must *receive the atonement*. Rom. v. 11—17. Saving faith has a special reference to this doctrine. The faith by which Christians, under the gospel dispensation, are justified and accounted righteous before God, is such a persuasion of the truth of the divine declarations respecting the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, as makes the soul cleave to him, and produces a sure trust and reliance upon his obedience unto death, as our only and all-sufficient ground of hope for the pardon of sin, peace with God, the gift of eternal life, and every spiritual blessing. When

we are "enabled thus to believe and come to God with our load of guilt and misery, not trusting in our own righteousness, but in his manifold and great mercies, as flowing to sinners through the sacrifice and atonement of Christ, then we find peace of conscience, and a quiet mind." Our souls are satisfied and strengthened, and our hearts are set at liberty to love and serve God with gratitude and entire devotedness.

The Protestant Episcopal Church speaks very decisively on this subject. "The right and true Christian faith is, not only to believe that Holy Scripture, and all the foresaid articles of our faith, are true, but also to have a sure trust and confidence in God's merciful promises, to be saved from everlasting damnation by Christ; whereof doth follow a loving heart to obey his commandments."*

Only conceive the state of mind of one awakened to a true knowledge of the law of God in its reasonableness, its purity, and its extent; and a true sense of his own exceeding sinfulness. He sees that he is justly condemned, heaven is forfeited, divine wrath is incurred, and any moment may plunge him into irremediable and endless ruin; and then say whether there may not be desires wrought in the heart that can be well compared to hunger and thirst; and whether there be not in the salvation of Jesus Christ, that which may justly be called the bread of life, and the fountain of

* See Homily on Salvation.—It is great pity that Episcopalians do not read sufficiently the Homilies of the Church. It is utterly impossible that there can be a better summary of faith and practice drawn from the Scriptures, and if they were more studied, there would be less danger of the inroads of pernicious doctrine.—I have scarcely ever seen the book of homilies in the hands of any of our church people, and it seldom occupies a place in any of their libraries. It is a gratifying circumstance, however, to mention, that the Homilies can now be obtained in a pamphlet form at a very inconsiderable expense, as there is a society established, called "The Homily Society of St. Paul's Church;" and several of the Homilies have already been published in a very handsome manner. I would recommend this society to the attention and patronage of the reader.—G. T. B.

living waters; and whether faith in his doctrines may not nourish and support the soul, just as much as the most suitable food does the body! Bread or flesh is not more adapted to meet the necessities of the hungry, nor wine to strengthen and revive the weak, than the atonement of the incarnate Saviour to supply the wants of the convicted, humbled, and penitent sinner. Nothing else indeed will supply his wants. Archbishop Cranmer (whose Treatise on the Sacrament is full of instruction) justly says, "There is no kind of meat that is corporal or able to the soul, but only the death of Christ's blessed body; nor any kind of drink that can quench its thirst, but only the blood-shedding of our Saviour Christ." Let us then, when we receive the Lord's Supper, spiritually feed on Christ as our all-sufficient and all-satisfying Saviour.

It is not one act of faith only that marks the Christian. *The just live by faith.* When we dwell on what Christ has done for us, and look to him for grace and strength, we receive continued supplies of spiritual food. Worldly things weaken our spiritual strength, and deaden our devout affections. Satan tempts us, and a corrupt heart leads us astray. In the midst of these dangers, it is only in proportion as we constantly come to Christ, and *receive out of his fulness grace for grace*, that we are strong and vigorous in the Christian life. Just as the body lives by receiving food from day to day, and thereby increases, and grows from infancy to manhood, so the soul lives by this faith in Christ, and grows from strength to strength till we come to *a perfect man.*

The Scriptures speak very strongly of the BLESSINGS connected with this faith in Christ. They are stated in the 6th chapter of John in many varied expressions. Without it is faith we have no spiritual life; through faith we have union with Christ, support, strength, consolation, and eternal bliss. The promise of eternal life may well be peculiarly cheering and animating to us. Observe how solemnly our Lord declares, (ver. 47,) *Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me hath everlasting life.* Who can calculate the mag-

nitude of this blessing? All the glories of this world fade before it. To be happy, and that for ever! what heart can imagine all that is comprehended in everlasting life? Look only at one point in the promise, (ver. 54,) *I will raise him up at the last day.* Place only the resurrection before your eyes. The last trump is sounded—the heavens pass away with a great noise—the LORD HIMSELF descends. In this tremendous day, amid the wreck of worlds, who shall stand when HE appeareth. It is the Judge of all mankind, and *who shall abide the day of his coming?* Whom will HE raise up and place in safety? See, above, the mansion of bright and eternal glory! Behold, below, the dreary and horrible abode of never-ending woe! O Christian reader, in the day of the resurrection, what a blessing beyond all description will it be to belong to Christ, and to have his promises engaged to raise *you* up to life and glory. Well, *whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have everlasting life.* You may safely build for eternity on his faithfulness. He has all power and might to fulfil his promises, all truth and willingness to perform them. O look unto Jesus, and be ye saved.

We may hitherto in this chapter appear to have departed from the direct subject of the Lord's Supper, but what has been said will tend to explain that feeding on Christ by faith, which is at once enjoined and signified by this ordinance. Though our Lord's discourse in the 6th of John has not a primary reference to his last supper, yet that institution points out the same actings of faith, which are illustrated by the instruction in that remarkable passage. Both the literal and spiritual feeding are happily expressed together in the address of the communicant, "Take and eat this, in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him *in thy heart* by faith with thanksgiving." Archbishop Cranmer very plainly and strikingly expresses the same ideas—"The true eating and drinking of the body and blood of Christ is, with a constant and lively faith to believe that he gave his body and shed his blood on the cross for us, and that he does so join and

incorporate himself to us, that he is our head and we his members; and flesh of his flesh, and bone of his bone, having him dwelling in us, and we in him. And herein stands the whole effect and strength of this sacrament. And this faith God works inwardly in our hearts by his Holy Spirit, and confirms the same outwardly to our ears, by the hearing of his word, and to our other senses by the eating and drinking of the sacramental bread and wine in his holy supper."

Let it be your desire, then, Christian reader, when you receive the outward emblems of his body and blood, by the grace of the Holy Spirit, and through faith, afresh to receive Christ himself as your only and your complete Saviour. Augustine denies that men can carry away from this sacrament any more than they can collect in the vessel of faith. Indeed it is only as faith is in exercise, and you are really looking to Christ, by and through the outward elements, that this institution will be of profit to you. It loses its whole design as to your individual good, if you are not depending, by faith, on the atonement of Christ, and applying afresh for an interest in his great salvation. Beside, the Lord's Supper shows us how the death of Christ is applied to our benefit. "As the bread and wine represents the body and blood of our Saviour, so the eating and drinking those elements point out that act of faith by which we apply to our own benefit the merits of his death. Whenever then you go to this holy table, lift up the eye of faith to the crucified Redeemer, dying for your sins, come with your burden to him, and so shall you *find rest unto your souls.*

CHAPTER IV.

On the New Covenant.

In appointing the Holy Communion, we have seen, our Lord calls the cup *the New Testament in his blood.*

We propose in this chapter, to explain the meaning of this expression, and briefly to state the nature of that Dispensation, which was secured to us through the atoning sacrifice of Christ.

The term which is here rendered Testament, is a translation of the Hebrew word בְּרִית, which is commonly rendered Covenant.* We do not find that the

* There have been considerable differences of opinion respecting the meaning of the Hebrew word בְּרִית and the Greek word διαθήκη, usually translated covenant. The author thinks that his readers will be interested in an abstract of some of the principal authorities which have fallen in his way.

On the HEBREW word, בְּרִית. Simon, in his Hebrew Lexicon, gives us the term covenant as the general meaning; and then, referring to the annexed passages, he says it denotes metonymically, a *promise*, (Numb. xviii. 19; 2 Sam. xxiii. 5;) a *constitution* or *statute*, (Jer. xxxi. 29;) and a *precept*, (Jer. xxxiv. 15;) because these are won, to be joined to covenants. The *Decalogue*, (Numb. x. 33; Deut. iv. 13; ix. 9—11,) and the sign of the Covenant, Gen. xvii. 13.

Gesenius, in a German Hebrew Lexicon, after stating the first sense to be that of a covenant, adds, as a second sense, it often only expresses that sort of covenant where the stipulation is all on one side; and has, therefore, when it is used to signify God's covenant with the Israelites, frequently the same meaning as a *Law*.

On the GREEK word διαθήκη, Grotius remarks, that it was adopted in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament, as it was found that the original Hebrew word was of a more extensive signification than the Greek word συνθήκη, their usual word for covenant. See Pol. Synopsis, vol. iv. p. 2.

Junius says, "It signifies neither a Testament, nor a Covenant, nor an Agreement; but as the import of the word simply requires, a disposition, or institution of God."

Schleusner gives the general interpretation to be *a disposition*; and with reference to the passage in the institution of the Lord's Supper, gives it the sense of "*a constitution, law*, or *form of religion*, or, as it is commonly called, a *Divine Œconomy*, from the manner of speaking among the Jews, who were wont to call the Mosaic religion בְּרִית, the likeness being taken from the covenants, which men are wont to enter into between themselves."

Hebrew word is ever used in the sense of a last will, and it is doubtful whether the Greek word be used in that signification in the New Testament.

A Covenant is an agreement on certain terms, and supposes two or more parties. But when God is one party to that which is rendered covenant, it must be considered as meaning rather *a Dispensation*, declaring his mercy and goodness, towards his sinful creatures, than a mere agreement. Isa. lix. 21; Heb. viii. 8—12. By a Dispensation, we mean that plan of procedure, on which God acts towards those who live under it, or, as it is more briefly defined by Dr. Johnson, "the dealing of God with his creatures." This general meaning of the term rendered Covenant, seems best to convey its sense in the passage immediately under our consideration. The term is used to denote the two chief systems of religion noticed in the Bible, the Jewish and the Christian. The nature and design of both these are fully declared in the Holy Scriptures, but as our Lord directly connects the celebration of the Lord's Supper with the New Dispensation, it will be proper, here, to give a farther account of it.

On the use of BOTH WORDS, Dr. Gill, in his Body of Divinity, says,—1. It is sometimes used for an *ordinance, precept*, and *command*. Numb. xviii. 19; Jer. xxxiv. 13, 14; Deut. iv. 13. 2. A covenant, when ascribed to God, is nothing more than a mere *promise*. Isa. lix. 21; Ephes. ii. 12. 3. We often read of the covenants of God, only *on one side*. Jer. xxxiii. 20; Gen. viii. 22; ix. 9—17; Hosea, ii. 18. 4. A covenant properly made between man and man, is by stipulation and restipulation, in which they make mutual promises, or conditions, to be performed by them. Gen. xiv. 13; xxvi. 28; 1 Sam. xx. 15, 16. 42; xxiii. 18.

Brown of Haddington also says, "Both words may in general be rendered an ESTABLISHMENT, and this signification will answer in every place where the words are found."

The importance of having a just view of the term, will be seen when it is remembered that it occurs above two hundred times in the Scriptures. It will be obvious that it has often a much larger signification than a mere agreement between two parties with mutual conditions.

It is CALLED NEW WITH REFERENCE TO THE JEWISH DISPENSATION, not having been fully manifested nor fully established as the only religion of men, till after the promulgation and lengthened continuance of that preparatory religion, which was given by Moses.

It is true that the plan of this rich dispensation of grace and mercy, for the salvation of sinful man, was laid before the world began. St. Paul assures Timothy that God "hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus, before the world began." 2 Tim. i. 9. Those who obtain its blessings are also described by St. Paul, as "chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, that they should be holy and without blame before him in love." Ephes. i. 4. Here we see all the parties in this covenant brought to our view at once.—God, the source of all blessings—men, who were to be the objects of his grace—and Christ, the mediator of the covenant, in whom all the subjects were chosen, and by whom they would ultimately be brought to eternal glory.

It is true also that it was in part manifested to man, from time to time, before the Christian Æra—first in the promise, *the seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent.* (Gen. iii. 15.) After this, as the apostle tells us, *to Abraham and his seed were the promises made;* and thus, as he assures us *the covenant was confirmed before,* (that is, before the law of Moses) *of God in Christ.* (Gal. iii. 16, 17. The Mosaic Dispensation was, in various respects, a figure, shadow, or representation of the new covenant, by its tabernacle, sacrifices, &c. As we proceed in reading the sacred volume, the promises and prophecies gradually unfold it with increasing clearness to our view. Though David's expression at the close of his life, may possibly have a more direct application to the covenant made with him personally, as to the throne of Israel, yet therein the promise of Christ was included, and the words are very descriptive of the blessings of this

better covenant, "He hath made with me an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things and sure—for this is all my salvation, and all my desire," (2 Sam. xxiii. 5,) as is that expression, "the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him, and he will show them his covenant." Ps. xxv. 14. Several of the Psalms, as xvi, xl, lxxxix, and cx, clearly show that the holy men of old entertained, in the progress of time, ideas, and used expressions, too large for the Jewish Dispensation, and applicable only to a different order of things. Isaiah, almost with the clearness of apostolical writers, brings before us that redemption, on which the Dispensation of grace is founded.

But notwithstanding this previous discovery of it, which doubtless engaged the faith, and raised the hope of the servants of God, from the beginning, it is still justly styled *new*, as it was only fully revealed after the coming of Christ. It is displayed to us in that volume, which is emphatically called the New Testament, or Covenant. Christ, as the Lamb of God, "verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who by him do believe in God." 1 Pet. i. 20.

It was also only fully established by the death of Christ. Solemn promises and engagements were of old established and ratified, by blood-shedding and sacrifices. Gen. xv. 8—18. Hence the Psalmist speaks of the covenant made with God by sacrifice. Ps. l. 5. Thus the death of Christ was the sacrifice that perfected the new dispensation.

And it was yet farther illustrated and confirmed by the resurrection and ascension of Christ. Thus not only was it proved that his death was accepted as an atonement for sin, and that the divine justice was satisfied, but he was raised up from the dead, and ascended into heaven to receive those blessings which he had purchased for sinful men, to bestow those blessings on them that believe in his name, and thus to carry on the work of salvation by supplying them according to their individual necessities with *grace to help in time of need*, and by filling them at proper

seasons, with joy and peace in believing through the power of the Holy Ghost.

Hence, as fully manifested, as completed by the death, and confirmed by the resurrection of Christ, and as compared with the covenant made with Israel on their coming out of Egypt, it is called the *new* covenant. The former dispensation is no longer necessary, and the Gospel is become the statute law of the whole church of God.

Having thus seen in what respect it is a new covenant, we will next view it IN CONTRAST WITH THE OLD COVENANT. The Scriptures frequently illustrate this subject, by contrasting or comparing one with the other.* The Jewish was a religion for a particular nation; (Deut. iv. 31—34; vii. 6;) the Christian was designed for all nations; (1 John ii. 2; 1 Tim. ii. 4—6;) the Jewish was temporary; (Heb. viii. 7—13;) the Christian is permanent; (Heb. xii. 27, 28;) the Jewish had conditions to be performed, as the ground of obtaining its blessings; (Exod. xix. 5—8;) the Christian promises those very conditions as blessings which will be freely bestowed. Jer. xxxi. 31—34; Ezek. xxxvi. 27; Rom. iii. 24; Eph. ii. 8, 9. In the first covenant, the law was written on tables of stone; but the second provides for its being written on the fleshly tables of the heart. 2 Cor. iii. 3. The mediator, priesthood, and sacrifices of the two covenants, are contrasted in the Epistle to the Hebrews, to show the superior advantages of the latter dispensation.

The old covenant, as considered apart from the discoveries and promises which it contains of the new, was *a ministration of death* and *condemnation*, (2 Cor. iii. 7—9,) pronouncing a curse on all who did not obey it perfectly, (Deut. xxvii. 6,) and, in some cases, inflicting the penalty of death, without mercy, on transgressors. Heb. x. 28. The Apostle calls it *a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear.* Acts xv. 10. As a ministration

* See the Epistles to the Hebrews and Galatians, passim; John, i. 16, 17; 2 Cor. iii. 3—18, &c.

of death and condemnation, it gives those who were never under it a very striking illustration of the sad state of all sinners. Those who sinned not against the light of the Jewish Dispensation, were yet *under sin.* Rom. iii. 9. They sinned against the light which they had; (Rom. ii. 12—15,) and God having *not left himself without witness*, (Acts xiv. 17,) they were *without excuse.* Rom. i. 20. But *the Law entered, that the offence might abound.* Rom. v. 20. It discovered and detected yet more strongly the universal and deep corruption, sinfulness, and ruin of man. *The soul that sinneth, it shall die;* but *all have sinned.* Hence all, whether under the Jewish law or not, are *guilty,* (Rom. iii. 19,) under a sentence of *death,* (Rom. vi. 23,) and *condemned* before God. John iii. 18.

In this state the new covenant finds all men; and it is a *ministration of righteousness*, as by it condemned sinners are taught the way of obtaining righteousness through faith in him, who has atoned for our sins, and fulfilled that law which we had broken. It is also *the ministration of the Spirit*, as while it is the only doctrine through which life and salvation are communicated to sinners, a much larger measure of the gift of the Holy Ghost is communicated, and to much wider extent, under the administration of the new covenant, than ever was under the old. John xvi. 7; Acts ii.

The old covenant conveyed many intimations of the Gospel; but it was in types and shadows, or by prophecies and promises; it imparted but the beginnings of that salvation which was to be afterwards more largely bestowed. But the new covenant both gives the substance of the emblems, and accomplishes the predictions and promises. John i. 17.

The old was, however, in the various points which have been noticed, and viewed in all its parts, a beautiful and glorious preparatory dispensation, introductory to that which was to be a blessing to the whole world, and wonderfully adapted, in its whole system, to make ready the minds of men to welcome the Gospel. *The Law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ.*

But *if that which was done away was glorious, how much more that which remaineth is glorious.* What cause have we to thank God that we live under the light and blessings of the most clear and perfect Dispensation which he has ever vouchsafed to his Church! May it have to be said of us "we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory."

The above contrast will enable us the more readily to understand THE NATURE OF THE NEW COVENANT. It will be sufficient to mention some of its leading features. Fully to explain it, would be to transcribe a great part of the sacred volume.

Dr. Watts gives this description of the Divine Dispensation in general. "The public Dispensations of God towards men are those wise and holy constitutions of his will and government revealed, or some way manifested to them, in the several successive periods, or ages of the world, wherein are contained the duties which he expects from men, and the blessings which he promises, or encourages them to expect from him, here or hereafter; together with the sins which he forbids, and the punishments which he threatens to inflict on such sinners." We purpose here to confine ourselves to a brief view of the peculiarities of the Christian Dispensation.

It discovers to us God as a RECONCILED FATHER. Col. i. 20, 21. We were *enemies in our minds by wicked works.* Man dislikes the service of that pure and holy God in whom he ought to delight, and daily offends him. He was therefore an object of God's just wrath, and if left to himself he must have perished for ever. Here, then, is manifested the boundless compassion and tender love of God. John iii. 16; 1 John iv. 10; Rom. v. 8. The reconciliation begins in his own infinite grace, displayed in redemption by Jesus Christ, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself; not imputing their trespasses unto them, and hath committed unto his ministers the word of reconciliation." 2 Cor. v. 19.

The new covenant is administered by a MEDIATOR.

A Mediator is one who goes between parties at variance. Man, being a sinner, and so at enmity with God, the plan of grace which God devised, required the interposition of a mediator to carry it into effect. Jesus Christ, our Lord, *is the Mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises* than the law of Moses. When we were enemies *we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son*. But besides obtaining the blessings of this covenant, he, as Mediator, dispenses them to us. Great as they are, and freely as they are now bestowed, if its continuation were to depend on the will and endeavours of fallen man, we should never receive them. The whole administration of the Gospel Dispensation is in his hands.—Jesus Christ *is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins.* He sends the ministers of the new covenant, (2 Cor. iii. 6,) to gather men into his church; he makes *his people willing in the day of his power.* Ps. cx. 3. He, of his own grace and love, when they were dead in sins, quickens them by his Holy Spirit, and *purifies them unto himself, a peculiar people zealous of good works.*

The administration of this dispensation is carried on in the hearts of men, by the secret and gracious influence of the HOLY GHOST, who is sent by Jesus Christ to convince and comfort, guide and govern, illuminate and instruct, preserve and sanctify his people while they sojourn here below, and thus prepare them for his eternal kingdom of glory above. Hence the gift of the Spirit is peculiarly promised, and much more largely dispensed under this covenant; *and it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will pour out of my spirit upon all flesh.*

The new covenant declares a way of SALVATION, the only way of salvation, and a salvation including deliverance from the guilt and power of sin, and the gift of eternal life. All are freely bestowed. "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordain-

ed that we should walk in them." Eph. ii. 8—10. Does any distressed and anxious mind inquire, *What must I do to be saved?* The answer in the new covenant is plain and express—*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.* Acts xvi. 30. This remarkably distinguishes it from the old covenant. The tenor of that was, *the man that* DOETH *these things shall live by them.* The tenor of the new is, *with the heart man* BELIEVETH *unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.* Rom. x. 5—9.

The new covenant has two leading ORDINANCES, also distinguishing it from the old—Baptism, and the Lord's Supper. Baptism is the appointed ordinance for our introduction into the visible church, and the Lord's Supper manifests our continuance therein.

Again, it contains PROMISES exactly suited to all our wants. See Jer. xxxi. 31—34; Heb. viii. 8—12. There are the blessings of redemption for the captive, pardon for the sinful, justification for the guilty, purification for the polluted, strength for the weak, wisdom for the ignorant, and help for the helpless. It proposes, in short, a full remedy for all our evils. The Scriptures are the records of its benefits. Let us search them diligently, that we may have as full a knowledge as we can, of all it contains for our use. The chief blessing is, indeed, eternal life. "For this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son; he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life. Nor are these uncertain promises; they are all Yea and Amen, in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The new covenant, therefore, gives the believer great SECURITY. It is *well ordered in all things, and sure.* 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. While it eminently tends, by the way in which its blessings are bestowed, to manifest the divine glory, and yet to promote the happiness of man; it also most effectually provides for obedience to the holy law of God. What God, as a righteous Governor, justly demands from us as his creatures, he now, according to the beneficent tenor of the new covenant, bestows as a gracious Benefactor. Is, for

instance, obedience to his laws his command as our God, and our duty as his creatures?—He promises in the dispensation of grace, to write his laws in our hearts. Heb. viii. 10. Is repentance equally required from us as sinful creatures?—he grants repentance unto life. Acts xi. 1. Is faith in his Son requisite for our salvation?—unto us *it is given to believe in his name*. Phil. i. 29.—Thus it is well ordered, as it guards against the weakness and corruption of our nature, which would otherwise prevent our obtaining its blessings. The happiness of Adam in Paradise, depending on the fidelity of the creature, failed; the national blessings granted to Israel, through their disobedience were forfeited; but in the better covenant, the fidelity of God is concerned, and he engages to work in us all that he requires of us. He promises not only not to depart from us, but that we shall not depart from him. "I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them to do them good, but I will put my fear into their heart, that they shall not depart from me." Jer. xxxii. 40; see also Isa. liv. 9, 10. 17. True it is, that many who have had right notions of religion, and have made a fair profession, do afterwards *make shipwreck of faith*; and this should guard us against presumption and self-confidence, and make us watchful and humble; but the Apostle assures us on this head, "they went out from us, but they were not of us, for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us." 1 John ii. 19. True it is, the sincere servant of God may fall into sin, in which case his transgressions will be punished with fatherly chastisements; yet the promise even in this case is, "nevertheless my loving kindness will I not utterly take from him, nor suffer my faithfulness to fail; my covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips." Ps. lxxxix. 33—34.

Who that knows and believes such gracious declarations, can but admire the infinite goodness and condescension of God, entering into such promises and engagements with his weak and sinful creatures!—What heart but must be touched and melted with such

wonderful love! O how can we hate sin enough, and love our God enough, after all that he has done for us.

Such is the blessed nature and character of the new covenant. We have farther to consider OUR DUTY WITH REFERENCE TO THIS GRACIOUS DISPENSATION; so that we may become interested in it, and partakers of its blessings. Every believer in Christ has a personal interest in the new covenant. We gain an interest in its blessings, when we seek them in the way of God's appointment. It is the divine invitation, "incline your ear and come unto me; hear, and your soul shall live, and I will make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David.—Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near." Isa. lv. 3—6. Our duty then plainly is earnestly to seek, and gratefully and believingly to accept the offered salvation, to observe its ordinances, and to *adorn in all things the doctrine of God our Saviour* If we are truly convinced of our lost condition, and of our sinful character; if we are truly desirous of such a salvation as that which is exhibited to us in the Gospel, God will freely grant to us the blessings of his grace, when we seek them in the name of Jesus Christ, and in a humble reliance on his atonement. The great Mediator will then plead our cause, and obtain for us, whatever is needful for present or future happiness. The Father hath committed all things into the hands of Christ, (Matt. xxviii. 18; John v. 22; Ephes. i. 22.) and when we come to him, and entrust our souls wholly to him, (2 Tim. i. 12,) he gives us the blessings of this covenant even as if it had been made solely and individually for us.

Surely *we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.—For how shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?* It is evidently just and right that those who refuse to receive and submit to so gracious a dispensation, should not have its blessings; that those who reject the remedy, should remain under the disease. We live now indeed under the full establishment of the new covenant, whether we accept it or

not; but we are not partakers of its blessings, unless we are seeking for salvation, as guilty and helpless sinners, through Jesus Christ. Nay, if we reject and persevere in our rejection of this only way of salvation, we shall perish with aggravated guilt, and in a more tremendous ruin than those who never heard the grace of God.

Thus has God so ordered it, that none shall inherit eternal life, but in the way of repentance, faith, and holiness; and yet none shall boast or glory in his sight. The future blessedness is so proposed and promised, that none can on good grounds hope that they individually have an interest in it, but as they are partakers of these previous graces; and yet, these being his gifts, we are in all respects saved by grace. The interests of holiness, the glory of God, and the happiness of man, are all effectually secured. Faith, repentance, and obedience, have often been considered as CONDITIONS of our salvation. This is true, if it be only meant that they ever accompany our obtaining eternal life. But the author avoids that mode of expression, it being apt to suggest ideas to the minds of the more ignorant, as if there were some MERIT in our works; something to be done on our part, on the ground of which we might expect something to be done on God's part; or as if there were POWER in man of himself to do that which is pleasing to God; both of which ideas are carefully to be guarded against, as directly opposing the plan of the Gospel. It tends also to damp the freedom of a loving heart, and to make our service one of constraint and fear rather than of voluntary and glad obedience. Are not the advantages of the term *condition* gained by representing good works, as necessary EVIDENCES of a state of safety and grace, as *things that accompany salvation*? Heb. vi. 9, 10.*

* Those who have supposed that the new covenant, as a covenant, necessarily implies conditions, do not seem to have duly considered the full signification and extended meaning of the original term, nor its use in places where no conditions are either named or supposable. Gen. ix.

GREAT COMFORT MAY BE DERIVED FROM THIS DISPENSATION. It is a satisfactory ground of HOPE for every good. That God should, before time began, have planned and fixed such a scheme of grace, and given his Son to effect it, may well fill us with the most cheering hopes. If a man have a real knowledge of the holy character of God, he cannot but see that he is justly condemned and exposed to eternal ruin. To such a one, the way of salvation, by the only Redeemer, will be unspeakably precious. He will readily see and acknowledge that he can only be saved by a dispensation of free and sovereign grace and mercy. Here, and here only, is a sufficient foundation for all our hopes. Let us say, then, with David, *This is all my salvation.* 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. The expression is peculiarly strong—ALL my salvation. Many are disposed to trust partly in their works and partly in Christ; but let them learn to depend simply, and exclusively, and entirely on the only Saviour, and to feel that without him they are wholly lost and undone; and in him, and with him, for ever blessed.

9—17; Isa. liv. 9, 10; Jer. xxxi. 31—34; xxxii. 37—41; Ezek. xvi. 60—63; Heb. xviii. 8—12. See also Isa. lv. 3; Luke i. 72, 73.

The view above taken does not by any means lessen our obligations to obedience. Our duties are binding on us, as creatures of God, as if we had full power of ourselves to discharge them. Our helplessness and pronenss to evil is the consequence of sin, and therefore a fault, and not a release from obedience. Nor let any man suppose that he may be negligent or careless; or must sit still and do nothing, till there be some extraordinary divine influence on his mind. The Apostle takes quite a different view, when he says, "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." But if it be asked, how we come to work at all, the Apostle shows us, "It is not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth; but of God that showeth mercy." And in another place, while he says, "I laboured more abundantly than they all," he yet immediately adds, "yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

It is also an abundant source of most lively joy. In the world Christians have tribulation. Besides the ordinary sorrows and distresses of life, and besides the afflictions of our families and connexions; the prevalence of sinful propensities, and the weakness of our faith, hope, and love, form a peculiar grief and burden to the Christian: but notwithstanding all the heavy and distressing trials and afflictions, to which we may be exposed, the dispensation of mercy in Christ Jesus may still fill us *with joy unspeakable and full of glory*. Observe the glowing terms by which it is introduced to us—"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth!" If God, the Sovereign Lord of all, be our friend, our joy, and our strength, if he be engaged to bless us, and we are hoping to be with him for ever, how can we sorrow *as those who have no hope?* The most important earthly events become insignificant and trifling, when we come to the borders of the grave. Then we need something solid and enduring to give us real satisfaction. We must have the word of God in our favour, and an interest in the covenant and promises of God to give us true joy. That can give joy, the highest joy, even in the prospect of death, judgment, and eternity. It has been the experience of thousands, and tens of thousands; and O that it may be the experience of the writer, and of every reader of these pages, that with Jesus as our Shepherd, we may *pass through the valley of the shadow of death, and fear no evil*. What can so effectually remove the sting of death as to survey this new covenant, in all its fulness and certainty, as engaging God himself to pardon, justify, and save those that trust in him? While we can never boast in ourselves, nor our own doings, and can derive no hope from ourselves, we may yet, from this glorious Dispensation, derive full and complete peace and joy. It shows us that we shall soon be in that blessed region, where neither our own sins, nor the sins of others, shall any longer harass

or distress us. In the hope of this happy state of enjoyment may we forget every sorrow, and may our hearts overflow with the most exalted joy!

It now only remains that we state why our Lord calls the cup in the Lord's Supper, *the New Testament in his blood*. He calls it so, not only as it is the emblem of that blood, which, as a sacrifice for our sins, obtained all the blessings of this new Dispensation; but also as that Dispensation was sanctioned by the blood of him who is Lord of all, ratified by the death of him who *was in the beginning with God, and was God*. The old dispensation was, as we have seen, (chap. i.) ratified by the blood of animals; but the greater magnitude, importance, and permanence of the Christian dispensation, may be discerned by the immensely greater value of the sacrifice which ratifies it. Where is a greater sacrifice to be found than that commemorated in the Lord's Supper? If Moses could refer Israel to the blood of animals, and say, *Behold the blood of the covenant!* how much more may Jesus call our attention to the figure of his own blood, and say, "This is my blood of the new covenant; this is the new covenant in my blood." Our Lord, in referring to the new covenant on this occasion, intimates, too, the speedy abrogation of the old; so that we may adopt the words of the apostle on referring to the expressions of Jeremiah, "In that he saith, a new covenant, he hath made the first old: now that which decayeth and waxeth old, is ready to vanish away." Our Lord, also, in mentioning his blood in connexion with this new covenant, points out to our special attention that blood as the only ransom-price of our redemption, the only meritorious cause of our salvation, and the perfect ratification of every blessing of the Gospel. He seems, too, to intimate, that while he thus obtained an infinitely gracious dispensation, it was an adequate motive for every suffering, and a compensation for all his woe. He saw *of the travail of his soul, and was satisfied*. Whenever, therefore, we receive the Lord's Supper, we are visibly and sensibly taught and reminded, what a gracious plan of salva-

tion there is, how it was obtained for us, and ratified to us; and we are called by fresh acts of faith in Christ, to claim a renewed interest in it.

CHAPTER V.

The Design of the Lord's Supper.

THE words of Scripture have hitherto been our guide in the statement of the doctrines connected with the Lord's Supper, and they furnish us with ample information as to its main design.* We have seen that

* This may be a suitable place to give a brief explanation of the NAMES given to this institution.

SACRAMENT is a name given to it in common with Baptism. It is not a scriptural name, and it has been variously explained. Some derive it from "Sacramentum Militare," the military oath of fidelity among the Romans, and so consider it as representing our solemn dedication of ourselves to be faithful soldiers of Christ. Others, from the circumstance of the most ancient translators of the Bible into Latin, usually rendering *μυστηριον*, *mystery*, by the word "sacramentum," think that it was adopted in the early ages of the church as an appropriate name for those ordinances in which there is a deep and hidden meaning veiled under a sign or figure. Augustine considers the word Sacrament as equivalent to a HOLY SIGN. He says, (see City of God, Book x. Chap. 5.) "an external offering is a visible sacrament, or an invisible sacrifice, that is, a holy sign." This is probably the true definition. The Church explains the meaning to be "an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as a means whereby we receive the same, and a pledge to assure us thereof;" thus bringing it before us as a divinely appointed means of grace, whereby we receive an increase of grace, and a token of the divine favour.

The BREAKING OF BREAD seems to have been the first and the Scriptural name of this institution, taken from the principal outward action of this ordinance. See Acts ii. 42—46; xx. 7.

The term COMMUNION was doubtless derived from St. Paul's account of this ordinance, 1 Cor. x. 16. It is descrip-

the words of the appointment decidedly express the doctrine of our Saviour's atonement, and point out the

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tive of the fellowship which we then have with Christ, and our Christian brethren.

The LORD'S SUPPER is (as is generally supposed) a name given to this institution by the apostle. 1 Cor. xi. 20. Being appointed by our Lord immediately after his last supper, and for his own more direct honour it is so called with great propriety. It has the authority of Christ for its observance, and it brings before us the atonement of Christ as the chief nourishment of our souls. Some have supposed that the apostle alluded to the ancient Love Feasts, or to them and the Communion, under the term Lord's Supper, but this is not very likely.

EUCHARIST, that is, *thanksgiving*. This is one of the most ancient names given to the Lord's Supper, apparently from the circumstance of our Lord giving thanks at the time of its institution. Chrysostom, in a Homily on the 8th of Matthew, says, "The dreadful mysteries, full of salvation, which we celebrate in every assembly, are called the Eucharist, because they are a commemoration of many benefits, and show forth the principal price of divine providence, and dispose us always to give him thanks."

OBLATION, SACRIFICE, and MEMORIAL, were names anciently given to this institution, not in the Roman Catholic sense, as has been fully proved by Protestant writers, but as being a spiritual sacrifice of prayer and praise, or as representing the great sacrifice on the cross.

It is often called the CHRISTIAN FEAST; perhaps in allusion to 1 Cor. v. 8. The soul of the believer has that satisfaction, refreshment, and nourishment in the atonement of Christ, here exhibited, which the hungry person has in his food. Some have considered it as similar in its nature to the ancient feasts upon a sacrifice; and that as they were of old accustomed to partake of the victim in order to gain the benefit of the sacrifice, so we partake of the emblems of our great sacrifice, to show our hope in him; but on this, see Note, chap. i.

It is sometimes called THE SEAL OF THE COVENANT; but this is not a Scriptural, and it does not appear to the author that it is a proper name. The idea is taken from Abraham's circumcision being "a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised," (Rom. iv. 11;) but this by no means implies that the Lord's Supper may justly be called a seal of the covenant. In fact,

ratification of the new covenant in his blood. The design of this institution, as it respects our practical conduct, will be more evident from the consideration of those expressions of our Lord, "this do in remembrance of me;" and those of his apostles, "as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come."

The cross of Christ is the glory of the Christian religion. It is the bright centre in which all the rays of spiritual light unite, and from which they proceed. It is so stupendous a fact in itself, that the Creator of all worlds, the great Jehovah, in the person of his Son, should take our nature upon him to expiate the guilt of our sins, that it may well have our constant meditation. Such tremendous sufferings, and such never-ending sorrows are averted by the completion of this grand system; and such incalculable, boundless, and eternal joys, are obtained by this sacrifice of himself, that we shall, through eternity, regard with unspeakable joy this wonderful grace of God in Christ Jesus.

The Lord's Supper is a solemn ordinance, designed for a perpetual exhibition and commemoration of the atoning sacrifice of the death of Christ. It is a representation to the outward senses of this great truth, that the only son of God became man, and died for our sins. It teaches us by signs and emblems, those doctrines which the preaching of the Gospel brings before us expressly in words. Herein Christ offers himself to us with all his benefits, and we receive him by faith.

Its great design is to represent, or place before us, to commemorate, and to show forth the death of Christ as a sacrifice for sin, and to declare our expectation of his coming again.

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an unsealed covenant is of no validity. The new covenant was ratified and confirmed by the blood of Christ. As far as it relates to the confirmation of our own faith, it may be said, as Calvin remarks, to be renewed, or rather continued, whenever that sacred cup is presented to us.

It is A REPRESENTATION, OR PLACING BEFORE US, OF THE LORD'S DEATH, AS A SACRIFICE FOR SIN.—This we have already shown in former chapters—but let us dwell more particularly on the design of this representation.

Dr. Owen in his Treatise on the Lord's Supper, says in substance as follows:—

"This Sacrament is a more special and particular representation and setting forth of Christ as our Redeemer, than either the written or preached word. God has appointed him to be *evidently crucified before our eyes*, that every poor soul that is stung with sin, and ready to die by sin, should look up to him and be healed. John iii. 14, 15; Isa. liii. 5. Let faith represent Christ to our souls as here exhibited of God and given unto us, as tendered to us, and received by us, and incorporated with us. Let us not rest in the outward elements and the visible sign. Christ in his love; Christ in his blood-shedding, agony, and prayer; Christ in his death, is here proposed before us, even by him who has appointed the institution. It is a way of proposal full of tenderness and love. To every communicant there is, by the grace and faithfulness of God, and through his ministers, a tender of Jesus Christ in his death and all its benefits. The main question is, whether you will stir up your hearts to a new and fresh receiving of Jesus Christ, who is thus proposed and tendered to you by the love of your Heavenly Father."

This is a very refreshing view of the Lord's Supper. The promises and proposals which Almighty God makes to you by his word are more general and have not that sensible and particular application to the individual which is made by this affecting and tender mode of proposing the blessings of the Gospel. When the minister says to you individually, *Take, eat*, and gives you individually the bread and the wine, how delightful is the thought that the blessings of salvation by Jesus Christ, are graciously tendered to you! O let us stir up our hearts gladly to receive them!

The Lord's Supper is designed to COMMEMORATE

CHRIST CRUCIFIED.* To commemorate, is to preserve the memory of any thing by some public act. We find that God frequently appointed memorials of past transactions or mercies, to declare to future generations his glorious works. Thus circumcision was appointed as a memorial of the covenant with Abraham; the stones taken out of Jordan, were appointed as a memorial of their passing across that river on dry land; the passover, or addition to its typical design, was appointed as a memorial, a perpetually repeated memorial, of the deliverance of the Jews from Egypt. We should, if left to ourselves, soon forget our beneficent Deliverer, and the pride of our hearts is ever tending to lead us to rely on ourselves, rather than simply rest on his promises of salvation; and hence the need of this memorial. The connexion of the precept in which we are required to do this *in remembrance of Christ*, shows that we are called on chiefly to remember his death and sufferings. Let us not remember them transiently and slightly, but deeply, seriously, and constantly. Let us recollect at the same time his original dignity and glory, his wonderful humiliation and abasement, his extreme sufferings, and painful death, his resurrection, ascension, and consequent glory.

We may at all times with advantage remember Jesus Christ as a MARTYR, witnessing a good confession before Pontius Pilate, (1 Tim. vi. 13,) and sealing it with his blood—as an EXAMPLE of suffering obedience even unto death, (1 Pet. ii. 21,) as a CONQUEROR, even in death triumphing over all his enemies; but it is particularly as A SACRIFICE FOR SIN, that we should regard his death when we surround his table.

Let not your minds be turned from this one point,

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* The word ἀνάμνησις, used by our Lord, conveys the ideas of commemoration and memorial, as well as remembrance. It may be noticed as a marked distinction between the two covenants, that under the law of Moses there was a commemoration of sins. Heb. x. 3. Under the Gospel there is a commemoration of a Saviour from sin.

but remember that Jesus Christ died for your sins, and keep in view the benefits thereby procured for you. It was remarked, by a much-valued friend, (the late Rev. W. Richardson, of York,) that many sincere worshippers deprive themselves of much of that comfort and strength which they might have received at the Lord's Table, by not having a single eye to the great object designed by that ordinance. Instead of keeping their minds steadily fixed upon Jesus Christ, as the Lamb that was slain, and dwelling on his sacrifice, and the efficacy of his blood, they have by turns meditated on a variety of other religious truths. They have endeavoured, for instance, to take a comprehensive view of the offices of Christ, and the various doctrines of his Gospel. This, though not so common a digression as vain and worldly thoughts, and not in itself a blameable one, may yet prevent our deriving that special benefit to be looked for in this sacrament, "the strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the body and blood of Christ," if it lead us from fixing our main thoughts on his death, for our sins. Those who wish to be comforted by this ordinance, should determine, while engaged in it, *to know nothing*, and to think of nothing comparatively, save *Jesus Christ, and him crucified*, and what is directly connected with that cheering and leading truth of the Gospel. It is here taken for granted that such know the evil of sin, wish earnestly to be healed of their spiritual maladies, and steadfastly purpose to lead a new life, for no other guests are invited to the Lord's Table. But, on this supposition, no sense of unworthiness, none of the suspicions inseparable from conscious guilt no respect to other religious doctrines, or topics, which in their season ought to engage our attention, should draw away our main thoughts from this capital truth of the Gospel. Nor shall we, if thus steadily and singly looking to the dying Saviour, depart from his table without some degree of strength and refreshment. It has been well observed, "There are seasons in the Christian's life in which the name of Jesus comes to his heart like a live coal from the altar, and brings

with it a warmth, a feeling, and a joy, which angels might come down from heaven to share."*

While the Lord's Supper commemorates, it also *shows forth the death of Christ*. 1 Cor. x. 26.

There is a precept respecting the observance of the passover which will illustrate this subject. "It shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean you by this service? that ye shall say, It is the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel in Egypt, when he smote the Egyptians and delivered our houses." Exod. xii. 16. Similar to this is the showing, the declaring, and openly publishing the Lord's death at his table.

But what do you show forth, or declare? We declare the FACT OF HIS DEATH. It has been observed, that when a fact is such that man's outward senses can judge of it; when it is performed publicly in the presence of witnesses; when there are public institutions kept up in memory of it; and such institutions commence, and are established at the time when the fact took place, it becomes a decisive and incontrovertible evidence of the truth of the fact. It is impossible that such an event did not take place. In this view, then, the continual commemoration of the death of Christ is, from age to age, a plain, manifest, and satisfactory evidence of his death to all mankind, and that death a sacrifice for sin. It is a standing proof of that great fact, which is the foundation of all our hopes.

We declare THE MANNER OF HIS DEATH. That though perfectly innocent, and the only-begotten and the beloved Son of God, his bodily and mental sufferings were most painful and severe. The breaking of the bread declares his body broken—the pouring out of the wine his blood shed. And in how many ways was that body broken! Mark his anguish and passion in Gethsemane; his being smitten, spitten on, mocked, and buffeted in the hall of judgment! His enemies put a crown of thorns on his head, and they smite

* See Bradley's Sermons.

them into his temples. After they had scourged him, the devoted victim is compelled to bear his own cross, till he sinks under the load. At length the iron nails were driven through the tender nerves, and he was suspended on the accursed tree.* Every part of his holy body was bruised and wounded. After lingering several hours in this agony, and receiving gall and vinegar in derision, he expired, amid the bitter taunts and revilings of those he came to save, and bearing the heavy wrath of Him in whose bosom he had for ever dwelt. And even after his death *one of the soldiers*, in wanton indignity and derision, *with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water.*

We there declare THE TRUE CAUSE OF HIS DEATH. If Jesus Christ had deserved to suffer, if like other men he had himself sinned, then there would have been no cause thus to celebrate his death. But *he was wounded* for our transgressions. "In the ordinary course of justice," says Bishop Andrews, "when a party is put

* Crucifixion was a most painful and ignominious mode of executing criminals. It was a Roman punishment, and only inflicted on slaves. The cross was made of two beams placed across, sometimes nearly in the form of a T, and sometimes in that of an X. Our Saviour's cross is said to have been of the former kind. This mode of death, as it was in the highest degree excruciating, so it was generally very lingering. First, the criminal was severely scourged. Next, he bore his cross, or part of it, to the place of execution. When he came thither, his clothes were entirely stripped off, and either before or after the cross was erected, his hands were sometimes bound, but ordinarily nailed to the cross beam, and his feet to the lower part. Large nails, rude and cruel instruments of torture, were thus forcibly driven through the most sensible parts of the body; and as they sustained part, if not the whole weight of the body, the pain must have been peculiarly exquisite. Thus the criminal hung, till hunger, thirst, and acute pain dismissed him from intolerable suffering. Thus, Christian reader, for our redemption, naked, despised, agonizing with pain, and exposed to the most cruel mockings, hung for several hours the innocent and holy Jesus, the Creator and the Saviour of the world!

to death, we say, and say truly, that the executioner cannot be said to be the cause of his death, nor the sheriff by whose commandment he does it, nor yet the judge by whose sentence, nor the jury by whose verdict, nor the law itself by whose authority it proceeded. Sin and sin only is the murderer. In a certain sense it is so here. It was the sin of our polluted hands that pierced his hands; the swiftness of our feet to do evil, that nailed his feet to the tree; the wicked devices of our head that gored his head; and the wretched devices of our heart that pierced his heart; our sinfulness caused his death, and his death takes away our sin." It has been observed, the very sufferings which, so far as we are concerned, were the effect of our crimes, were, by the mysterious counsel of God, the expiation of them.—Christ was weary, that we might rest; he hungered, that we might eat the bread of life; and thirsted, that we might drink the water of life. He grieved, that we might rejoice; and became miserable, to make us happy. He was apprehended, that we might escape; accursed, that we might be acquitted; and condemned, that we might be absolved. He died, that we might live; and was crucified by men, that we might be justified before God.

Thus the Lord's Supper was designed to represent, commemorate, and show forth the Lord's death as a sacrifice for sin. This is done for our own edification, as a testimony to the world, and as a prevailing mode of pleading his merits before God. It has been observed, that "What we more compendiously express in that general conclusion of our prayers, *through Jesus Christ our Lord*, we more fully and forcibly represent in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist, wherein we plead the virtue and merits of the same sacrifice here, that our Great High Priest is continually urging for us in heaven."

Whenever, then, Christian reader, you celebrate this ordinance, we exhort you, in the expressive words of a late writer, "Look up to the offering of Jesus Christ once for all: look to him as dying for the remission of

your sins, washing them away in his precious blood; suffering that you might be saved. And while you are kneeling under his cross, touched with the utmost possible sense of God's love, who gave his only begotten Son, and affected with sentiments of the most tender devotion to him who gave himself for you, embrace also with your good will all mankind, who he loved for his sake. Then rise up, by his grace, to the sober, continual practice of every thing that is good, and excellent, and praiseworthy, and conformable to such sentiments and affections, and the obligations laid on you by his infinite love."

The observance of the Lord's Supper contains also a virtual DECLARATION OF OUR EXPECTATION OF HIS COMING AGAIN. We show forth the Lord's death, *till he come*, as the Judge of all men. 1 Cor. iv. 5; xi. 26.

By this ordinance we acknowledge that Jesus Christ will come to JUDGE THE WORLD. We show that we believe that a solemn day is approaching, when *God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or evil*—that all mankind shall then be divided into two classes, and only two, the righteous and the wicked—the future inhabitants of heaven and of hell—of everlasting punishment, and everlasting life. Partaking of the Lord's Supper, is an implied and public avowal of this expectation. How important is this avowal! How well calculated to restrain evil, and encourage righteousness! How suited to fill us with a holy reverence of God, and a just fear of displeasing him!

But while this view inspires reverence, there is another consideration which should fill the servants of God with the liveliest hope and joy. He comes also AS THE SAVIOUR OF HIS PEOPLE. Heb. ix. 28.

Had we no further view than to remember and declare our Saviour's death, this ordinance would be full of comfort; but since we have not only to look back on what Christ has done, but forward to what he will do, new beams of light and joy are shed around this blessed institution. It leads us to look up to Jesus as a living Redeemer, gone to prepare places for us in

the mansions of his Father's house, (John xiv. 2, 3,) and to comfort each other with the animating hope that, notwithstanding all the dangers, trials, and sorrows of our present state, we shall soon be admitted into his presence, and then *we shall ever be with the Lord.* In receiving the Lord's Supper, we declare our hope that Christ will hereafter appear for us as our Deliverer; that however now we may be groaning under the burden of many sins, contending with our spiritual enemies, and often worsted in the contest; yet then he will have purified our souls, and will *present us faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.* We declare our hope, that however the Christian may now be afflicted and despised, his wisdom will one day be universally acknowledged; the justice of God perfectly cleared; and his servants be openly owned by him, and for ever blessed with him.

When this happy day arrives, then, and not till then, will the observance of this solemn ordinance cease to be a duty. "Then his people will no longer need such memorials as these; for they will incessantly enjoy the brightest vision of his person, and the richest fruits of his death."

CHAPTER VI.

The Obligation to receive the Lord's Supper.

When we consider the very small proportion of the congregation assembling for public worship, which usually remains to partake of this ordinance, it cannot be deemed unnecessary, to insist on the obligation which lies on the truly pious not to neglect it. Even in more religious congregations, where the ministry is most efficient, it has been calculated that not more than one fourth stay to partake of the Lord's Supper, while the proportion is, in general, much less.

The primitive Christians did not thus turn away from the Lord's table; the churches communicated every Lord's day, and it was the practice for ALL, both clergy and laity, to receive.*

What a blessing would it be to the Church, could it be again said of Christians, "they continued daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people."

Observe the reasons which should induce sincere Christians to attend to this Institution.

THE EXPRESS COMMAND OF OUR SAVIOUR.—*This do in remembrance of me.* Luke xxii. 19; 1 Cor. xi. 24, 25. Here we have a plain and positive precept. It is so express that it cannot easily be mistaken. It has been objected, that such a rite is inconsistent with the spirituality of the Gospel, and has no moral foundation; but the very circumstance that the command rests on the ground of positive institution, and not of natural duty, makes the observance of it a direct acknowledgment of the authority of Christ, and the neglect of it a disregard of his precept. Hence, as Dr. Owen says, "Faith and obedience here give special honour to Christ as our Sovereign. It is, in fact, the most direct profession of the subjection of our souls and consciences to the authority of Christ in all our religion. Our reason for it is, Christ would have it so." There is no uncertainty in the direction; it is not conveyed in dark and obscure terms,—"this do. The command is easy. No burdensome and costly sacrifices are required, no long and tedious rites and ceremonies are to be gone through. You cannot say

* See Bingham's Christian Antiquities, folio, vol. i. p. 824—826, and Acts xx. 7. Some have thought from the statement, "they continued steadfastly in the Apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and prayers," (Acts ii. 42,) and from the expression *coming together to eat*, &c. (1 Cor. xi. 20, 33,) that the primitive Christians received the Lord's Supper whenever they assembled together for public worship.

it was designed for the twelve Apostles, or for the Jewish nation only; for the motive applies to all with increasing strength as time rolls on, and the practice of the primitive Gentile Church contradicts such an interpretation. It is also against the express revelation made to the great Apostle of the Gentile Church, for the instruction of the Gentiles. He begins his account of this ordinance by saying, "I have received of the Lord, that which I also delivered to you." 1 Cor. xi. 23. The command being positive, love to our Saviour constrains us to obedience. *If ye love me, keep my commandments*, applies to every direction of Christ; but with peculiar force to one given at the point of death, and directly concerning his own honour. The command being positive, the matter comes, where this ordinance is neglected, to this sad issue, "either Christ is not your Lord, or you are not his disciples; for a Lord without obedience! a disciple without obligation! how manifest the absurdity, how evident the inconsistency!"

2. THE MOTIVE ASSIGNED FOR OBEDIENCE.—It is peculiarly touching and affecting—*in remembrance of Christ*. In fulfilling a plain precept, you also give a required evidence of affectionate recollection of a Saviour's death. A grateful heart longs for occasions of testifying its attachment, and gladly avails itself of any opportunity of showing love to a gracious benefactor. To whom are you so much indebted as you are to Christ? In what instance can you possibly have equally strong reasons to show gratitude and affection?

3. THE UNIVERSAL PRACTICE OF THE CHURCH in the primitive ages strengthens this view of the duty. The whole scope of the Apostle's reasoning with the Corinthians, (1 Cor. x. 16—21; xi. 20—34;) shows that the first Christians were in the frequent habit of eating this bread and drinking this wine. The mode of expression, (Acts xx. 7,) "upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them," naturally leads us to conclude that it was the practice of the church at Troas

to communicate weekly. In fact, it is known* that it was in the primitive times received weekly, and in

* See Bingham's Christian Antiquities, book xv. chap. ix. Justin Martyr has given us, in an Apology for the Christians, written only 140 years after Christ, an account of the mode of celebrating the Lord's Supper in his time. I subjoin what he says, as being calculated not only to show the practice of the church, but to prove that the peculiarities of the Roman Catholic Mass were then unknown.

Describing the rites of the first Communion after Baptism, he says, after prayers "bread and a cup of wine, and water, are brought to the President or Bishop, which he takes, and offers up praise and glory to the Father of all things, through the names of his Son and the Holy Spirit; and this thanksgiving to God for vouchsafing us worthy of these his creatures, is a prayer of more than ordinary length. When the Bishop has finished the prayers and the thanksgiving service, all the people present conclude with an audible voice, saying, Amen; now *Amen* in the Hebrew tongue is, *so be it*. The Eucharistical office being thus performed by the Bishop, and concluded with the acclamations of all the people, those we call Deacons distribute to every one present to partake of Eucharistical bread, and wine, and water, and then they carry it to the absent."

"This food we call the Eucharist, of which none are allowed to be partakers, but such only as are true believers and have been baptised in the laver of regeneration for the remission of sins, and live according to Christ's precepts, for we do not take this as common bread, and common wine. But as Jesus Christ our Saviour was made flesh by the word of God, and had real flesh and blood for our salvation, so we are taught that this food, which the very same word blessed by prayer and thanksgiving, is turned into the nourishment and substance of our flesh and blood; and is in some sense the flesh and blood of the incarnate Jesus." After quoting the account of the institution from the Gospel, and adding a remark respecting the mysteries of Mithra, he proceeds, "after this sacrament is over, we remind each other of the obligations to his duty, and the rich relieve the poor, and upon such charitable accounts we visit some or other every day." His description of Christian worship on the Sunday, leads us to conclude that the Lord's Supper ever formed a part of public worship on that day. See Reeve's Apologies of the Fathers, p. 115—126.

some cases oftener. Now if they, some of whom had seen our Lord die, and all of whom had the ardent attachment of primitive Christianity to their Lord, felt it needful and advantageous thus frequently to celebrate the memorials of his dying love, how much more should we who live at so much greater a distance of time, and in a period when *the love of so many has waxed cold?* This being an institution appointed by Jesus Christ, the Founder of a spiritual Church, and who gave his disciples his complete design when he established that Church, it was not like many of the ordinances of the Jewish state, merely supported by carnal reason, or suited to their national condition, or continued for a season, on account of their prejudices. It is evidently and eminently fitted to promote our spiritual improvement, and commanded in a manner which leaves us no reason to suppose that it was ever intended to be set aside, or abrogated, as the Church got more light and experience, but rather designed as a standing ordinance.

4. THE STATEMENT OF ST. PAUL PROVES THAT THE OBLIGATION IS STILL BINDING ON CHRISTIANS. *As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come.* 1 Cor. xi. 26. While the expression implies that the Corinthians were in the frequent practice of partaking of the Lord's Supper, it shows that it is the duty of the Church to celebrate it, till our Lord come to judge the world. It is surely an insufficient answer to this passage to say that the coming of Christ here intended is his spiritual coming, or the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in true believers; for he had undoubtedly come in this manner to many of the Corinthians, and yet they were in the habit of partaking of the outward ordinance, and the Apostle directed them to continue the practice.

Hence we conclude then that the respectable, and in many respects exemplary body of Christians, who from motives of conscience lay aside the outward observance of this Sacrament, are not borne out by scriptural authority, or primitive practice.—But let us not judge or condemn them; but rather remember of

each one, *to his own Master he standeth or falleth.* Our reasoning applies with peculiar force to those who have no such scruples, and yet usually abstain from the Lord's Table. It leaves them without excuse.

The FREQUENCY with which we shall discharge this duty is indeed here left, as in various other cases, to our own conscience. Thus it becomes a trial of the state of our mind towards our Redeemer, a test of our affectionate remembrance of him, and an evidence of the warmth of our love to him. Judging by this test, is not, Christian reader, the true state of the Church, even in our favoured land, lamentably low? It may be said generally, that if your heart be right with God, you will omit no opportunity that occurs in the place where you worship, to pass by without enjoying this blessing. Thomas, when once absent from the disciples, lost the cheering sight of his Saviour which they enjoyed. Yet the frequency of the communion should not perhaps be such as may tend to prevent preparation, or the impression which a solemnity has, when received at occasional intervals. It appears very desirable that it should be administered and received once a month, and on the great festivals of our Church. Nor need we fear that such a frequent reception will so abate our reverence in attending as to hinder our profit. The daily practice of prayer and reading the Scriptures has not such an effect. It is observable, that the epistle which gives particular caution against formality, gives the direction, *not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together.* Heb. x. 35. Some pious ministers have found monthly communion to be more adapted to the present circumstances of the Church, than its more frequent administration.

Supposing the obligation to receive it to be plainly proved, and fully admitted, consider farther, that to NEGLECT it, is attended with aggravated guilt and danger.

It is WILFUL AND REPEATED DISOBEDIENCE TO YOUR SAVIOUR. He directs you, and his ministers invite you, to frequent his table. They say again, and again, *Come, for all things are now ready.* But if you are

living in the neglect of this ordinance, you greatly resemble those who first rejected the Gospel. They *with one consent began to make excuse;* and you know that it was said of them, *none of those men which were bidden, shall taste of my supper.* The soul was to be cut off, and the man was to bear his sin, that neglected to eat the passover. Numb. ix. 7—11. Have you not reason to fear that a neglect of the Lord's Supper will be attended with a similar danger.

It is SEPARATING FROM YOUR CHRISTIAN BRETHREN. You thus break off communion with your fellow Christians. By such conduct you declare that you wish not to be numbered with the true disciples of Jesus Christ, but had rather have your lot with those who neglect him.

It is A VIRTUAL UNDERVALUING OF YOUR BAPTISM. That was the sign of your admission into the Christian Church. The Lord's Supper is the sign of your continuance in it. By neglecting it, you appear to count your baptism a privilege not worth maintaining. This is also done when you come to years of discretion, and it is your own voluntary act, even after, through the piety of your parents, you had been baptized. Is it not manifest, that if it had been left to your own choice, you would not have been baptized? Do not go thus far to renounce Christianity. It was a great sin to withdraw from professing it, in times of difficulty and persecution, (Heb. x. 26—31,) when it might seem to admit of some extenuation from the frailty of man, and the fear of such dreadful sufferings as the primitive martyrs underwent; but "by neglecting the Lord's Supper, (the peculiar rite of Christians,) do you not in effect deny the profession that you may have made of Christianity, and deny it, remember, in times of liberty and encouragement?"

It is A PUTTING A SLIGHT ON YOUR SAVIOUR'S DEATH. The Lord's Supper is the memorial of his Sacrifice. When you refuse to come, you do in effect declare, I will remember my worldly friends, my pleasures, my private pursuits, or other engagements; but I will not remember my Redeemer in the greatest instance of

his love. I will not confess my dying Lord; I will not honour his name; I will not declare my hope in his cross. I wish to have no concern in his atonement and salvation. Christian reader, can you bear the implications which attach to this neglect? Did Jesus die for you, and will you not obey one of his last, one of his most easy, one of his most delightful precepts? The point is gained. Your heart yields. You will mourn over your past ingratitude, and determine to embrace every opportunity of remembering and publicly confessing a crucified Saviour. You see that not to do so, is in fact to renounce communion with Christ, and to say, "I can spend my time with ease and pleasure, in the scenes of idleness and trifling; but I care not to be with Christ, and love not communion with him."

But THE YOUNG may be especially addressed on this subject. The Jews, it would appear, (Luke ii. 41, 42,) took their children at twelve years of age, to partake of the passover; and well would it be if Christian youth, at twelve or fourteen, under right impressions, and with intelligence and piety, began to partake of the Lord's Supper. When this season is neglected, life passes silently forward, habits of omission get formed, and diffidence and false shame strengthen them. It has been observed, "we naturally feel some degree of embarrassment in doing any thing, for the first time, that is attended with a considerable degree of interest, and public solemnity." This difficulty increases with increasing years. I trust that those of my younger readers, whose hearts are renewed by divine grace, will therefore feel that now is the happy opportunity, now is the precise time, in which they should commence a practice which will soon become a blessed habit, bringing along with it a most important train of consequences, full of benefit to them all their days. It is a turning point of your life. Come to this table, and you are taking a most important step towards fixing you for a holy, useful, and happy life. Turn from it, and you are multiplying the difficulties which the world, the flesh, and the devil, ever present in the

way to heaven. *The kindness of our youth,* (Jer. ii. 2,) is much remembered by our heavenly Father. Give, then, to Christ, the first and the best of your days.

Yet while we would invite you, and all Christians, and require you in the name of your Saviour, not to neglect his plain command, we would press you also to *examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith;* if you are still living in a course of sin, come not here; but yet keep not away altogether; repent of your sins, believe in Christ, devote yourselves to him, and then come, and you will obtain both edification and comfort.

In this chapter we have only considered the obligations in the way of duty; the privilege must be reserved for further notice. Let us feel with Bishop Taylor, "Happy is that soul that comes to these springs of salvation, as the hart to the water-brooks, panting and thirsting, weary of sin, and hating vanity, and reaching out the heart and hands to Christ."

CHAPTER VII.

Answers to the Excuses commonly made for not coming to the Lord's Supper.

The obligation will be still farther felt, if we consider the excuses by which scrupulous or unwilling minds commonly justify their absence.

That which is most frequently urged, and which has perhaps the greatest weight, is this—they that receive unworthily, incur great guilt; WE ARE UNWORTHY, AND THEREFORE WE DARE NOT GO. This excuse, seeming to imply a reverence to this institution, makes many easy, under a direct act of disobedience; yet, in fact, it arises from ignorance and unbelief.

It arises from IGNORANCE; for many persons do not make the evident distinction between being UNWORTHY and receiving UNWORTHILY. The very best are unworthy. The guilty and the sinful are the very

persons invited to come. A sense of our sinfulness is a needful part of preparation. If indeed a poor man resist, or cast from him, the bounty of the benevolent, he is unworthy of relief. If a sick man reject the medicine which would heal him, he is unworthy of health; but you see evidently that the poverty of the one is the very reason why he should take the offered relief; the sickness of the other is the most powerful motive to welcome and receive the physician's prescription. If then you are sensible of your unworthiness, and desire pardon and grace, you should ask them, not because you are worthy, but because you need these blessings, and must perish without them. You not only want them, but Jesus Christ invites you to come and receive supplies adapted to your necessities. If you are afraid of receiving UNWORTHILY, you will find in a subsequent chapter some information and directions which may remove this fear.

But is there not much UNBELIEF and presumption in staying away? You think, perhaps, that by going you are presuming. No: it is not presumption to accept our Lord's invitation, and fulfil His command. For why was the precept given, if it were presumptuous to obey it? Take care lest you be found impugning the wisdom of the great Legislator. The presumption is, refusing to come, and not obeying the precept. Our turning away from the Lord's table does not prove our humility, but our forgetfulness of Christ's request. Is there not reason to fear that it arises not "from a tender conscience, but from a cold, careless, worldly heart?" Burkitt well observes, that "the reverence which our Saviour expects to this holy institution, is a reverence of obedience." Some that object to receive on account of unworthiness, do, as it has been remarked, "venture at some great solemnities, as Easter, to approach this table, which makes it wonderful how they can reconcile their notion of unworthiness with their practice of receiving at such seasons; or else they must have at those seasons a better opinion of themselves than is consistent with Christian humility." But beware of unbelieving

thoughts of your Heavenly Father's love; entertain not hard thoughts of the compassionate Saviour of men. They are highly dishonourable to his character, his word, and his promises, and are very prejudicial to yourselves. The Lord's Supper was never designed to be a snare for human frailty. Remember, that you are, not coming to *Mount Sinai*, burning with fire, and covered with blackness, with bounds fixed to keep off the people; but rather to *Mount Sion, to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things.*"

Another excuse with many is, I AM TOO MUCH ENGAGED IN BUSINESS TO PREPARE FOR SO SOLEMN A DUTY. "I cannot," says Bishop Patrick, "believe that any man is so employed, that constantly, when he is to receive the sacrament, he must omit it, or be a great loser. It is incredible, that his business must be done just at that time, and that none other will serve." He then shows the futility of the excuse, by stating, that if a large sum of money were to be given, every time a person came, few would resist this golden reason; they would, in that case, put aside all other business. Such a view may lead us to detect the real state of our mind. Consider, if the true meaning of this excuse be not this—"I am leading a life inconsistent with the discharge of Christian duties; I am living an unchristian life; and if I die, my soul is lost for ever." The discharge of your religious duties is your first and great business; and you had better let the body perish for want of its proper food, than the soul perish for want of spiritual food. Remember, however much you are occupied, you will one day stand in judgment before Him, who, though so engaged in providing for your salvation, as not to have time to eat bread, yet spent whole nights in prayer, rather than neglect to fulfil all righteousness. Yet, after all, the due preparation, for the Lord's Supper is often much mistaken. This subject will be afterwards noticed. Those who are really so engrossed in this world's business, as to leave no time for their most solemn duties, should seriously inquire, whether much of that business that

hinders them, be not needless, or hurtful to their highest interest. But however this may be, no business of this world can justify the continued neglect of manifest religious duties. *Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you.*

A third excuse sometimes offered is, I HAVE RECEIVED THE LORD'S SUPPER, AND HAVE FOUND NO BENEFICIAL EFFECTS FROM IT. Perhaps you have mistaken the kind of benefit which you expected, and have looked for sensible and momentary comfort, instead of solid growth in grace. This ordinance has no miraculous power over the animal frame, but supplies the mind with powerful motives and considerations, whereby, through the gracious influence of the Holy Spirit, we are enabled to resist the attacks of our spiritual enemies. It is a means of obtaining spiritual strength from God. The Christian cannot perhaps fully know in this world, what secret strength may thus have been given to him, and how he may have been kept from the ways of sin, and in the ways of God by the motives here suggested to his mind. But we may very safely, as to this excuse, put it to every conscience.—Can you really say, after you have deliberately prepared yourself for this ordinance, and received it with seriousness, that no resolution against sin has received fresh confirmation, no obligation to obedience has been strengthened? Or at least is it not presumptuous to question the efficacy, or deny the obligation, of attending upon an ordinance of God, merely because you have not yet derived from it all the benefits which you expected?

Again, it is objected, I AM AFRAID THAT, WEAK AS I AM, I SHALL BREAK MY RESOLUTION, AND SO INCUR GREATER GUILT. You forget that this ordinance is calculated to strengthen your resolutions. You forget that every temporal blessing you partake of increases your obligations to serve God. You forget the greater guilt of neglecting a Divine Institution. But deliberately ask yourself, "Do I mean to give up myself to the unrestrained enjoyment of sin, and the certainty

of endless ruin—or do I wish to be the disciple of Christ, and the heir of his glory?" If indeed you cared not about eternal life, and could be supposed awfully to choose eternal wrath, this excuse would be less inconsistent. But if you really desire to live with Christ, and to spend a blessed eternity in the mansions above, consider, that the admission of your weakness is the reason why you should constantly go to the Lord's table for new supplies of grace; and if you fall again, as all more or less do, come the oftener to the appointed means of weakening sin, and enlivening faith, hope, love, and every Christian grace.

Some have felt scruples about receiving, because OTHERS WERE AT ENMITY WITH THEM: but this is not founded on any just interpretation of Scripture. This view would also condemn our Saviour, the twelve Apostles, and the whole primitive Church; for none had such bitter enemies as they had at the very time this communion was most frequent.

Others feel the presence of some against whom they have a prejudice, or of whom they have reason to think ill, a sufficient excuse; forgetting the peculiarity of the Apostle's expression—HE *that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation* TO HIMSELF, and not to his fellow communicants; forgetting our Lord knew that Judas would betray him, Peter deny him, and all forsake him, when he celebrated the last Supper with them. Yet we would not by these remarks justify indiscriminate communion. The Holy Scripture, (1 Cor. v. 11—13,) as well as our Church directs, that all open sinners be excluded.

Others *receive* ONLY at particular Festivals,* not con-

* It is to be feared that this most inconsistent practice is not confined to the church of England, but that it prevails to a very considerable extent in our own church, and especially in our cities. To this it may be added, that there are many who are very irregular in their attendance at the Lord's Table, and who, though in the church during the preceding part of the service, are observed very frequently to retire with the rest of the congregation. Such persons as these had better abstain entirely from the Lord's Table

sidering, as Chrysostom remarks, that "what makes it reasonable to communicate, is not merely a festival, or the time of a more solemn assembly, but a pure conscience and a life free from sin."

"Some Christians," it has been observed, "inquire whether they should continue to approach the table of their Saviour, when their consciences are burdened with the guilt of any particular sin. To this the answer is obvious, because one end of receiving the body and blood of Christ is, to obtain the very blessings of pardon, and peace of conscience, which the objection supposes to be most wanted. If, indeed, unhappily, we have committed some aggravated offence against God, and the ordinary period of our partaking of the Eucharist be near, it may be expedient to abstain for that season from the Lord's Supper; but this abstinence must be with the express intention of more humbly confessing our sins before God," that we may with sincere penitence and faith hereafter receive.*

It may appear wonderful, even allowing the general

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until they can come with the proper disposition: and then they will think it a privilege to draw near to God in the Supper, from which nothing but the most urgent necessity can possibly detain them. Of all things, let not professing Christians make the Holy Communion a matter of lukewarmness and indifference. There is nothing more incongruous than a half-way, almost Christian; and scarcely any thing is more calculated to degrade the Church in the estimation of the pious of other denominations, than to observe this blessed ordinance of our most holy religion treated with so marked an indifference, as is implied in this *occasional* neglect of its participation. I hope that these few remarks may meet the eye and sink to the heart of many a one who comes under the censure. Much more might be said, but I forbear. Thus much I felt constrained to say.—G. T. B.

* See the Rev. D. Wilson's comprehensive "Address to Young Christians previous to receiving the Lord's Supper." The section on "The objections which are sometimes raised against partaking of the holy communion" is peculiarly adapted to answer the scruples of young Christians.

darkness and corruption of the human heart, that there should be such a prevailing tendency in professing Christians to negligence, in a case where there are so many strong and tender motives for obedience. Some of the fears, possibly, may have originated from the once generally diffused papal doctrine of transubstantiation, and from a general misconception of the Apostle's reproof of the Corinthians, for their irregularities. This part of the subject will be considered hereafter.

Perhaps, however, at the root of all these excuses, there is an unsuspected, secret unwillingness of heart. Men have often a feeling of this kind. It would disturb their quiet, make them uneasy in their mind, and hinder them from enjoying the pleasure that they are wont to take in their sins. Let every one who neglects the Lord's Supper, examine this point well!

From the whole, we may conclude that there is nothing to discourage the PENITENT BELIEVER, from a constant and invariable attendance at this table. The duty is manifest, and the advantage great and evident.

And on the other hand, those LIVING IN the love and practice OF SIN, may here see the grievous state to which their conduct reduces them. You are afraid of going to the Lord's Table, lest you should eat and drink damnation; but have you no reason to be afraid of the consequences of disobeying a plain command by staying away? Your sins reduce you to a sad dilemma of danger. Nothing can deliver you from it but speedy repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no safety to any living soul, but in fleeing to him *who is able to save!* Let me then earnestly and affectionately entreat every such reader, to examine their own hearts, to ascertain without delay their true state before God, heartily to repent of their sins, and seek the salvation of the Gospel. Then, when you have experienced a real change of heart, when you are born again of God's Spirit, and have a good hope through grace, you will come and receive the Lord's Supper, not only without danger

and reluctance, but with the greatest comfort and advantage.

We will conclude this chapter in the animating words of Bishop Patrick.

"Let no man therefore plead this, or that, in excuse for his not coming to the Lord's Table; but resolve hereafter carefully to perform so necessary a duty. Let the sinner quit his state of sin and death, and so come and eat of the bread of life. Let the ignorant come into the school of Christ, and proceed till they come to the highest form, to the upper room, where this feast is celebrated. Let those that are at enmity with their neighbours also come; let them only first go, and be reconciled to their brethren, and so let them offer their gift. Let those that have a multitude of worldly employments come; only let them leave them, as Abraham did his asses at the bottom of the mount, and so let them ascend to heaven in their thoughts, and converse with God. Let the weak come, that they may grow in strength; and let the strong come, that they may not grow weak. Let them who have fears come, that their hearts may be settled by the acts of a more lively faith; and let them come who have hopes, that they may rise to greater degrees of a humble confidence. Let those who have leisure accept of this invitation, because they have no excuse; and let those who have but little leisure entertain it also, that they may the more sanctify their business and their employments. Let the sad and sorrowful approach, that their hearts may be filled with the joys of the Lord; and let those that rejoice in the Lord always approach, that their joy may be full."

CHAPTER VIII.

On receiving unworthily.

This part of our subject, from its importance, calls for distinct consideration. The timid and the fearful

are either deterred from a most valuable means of grace, by needless fears and scruples, or come with suspicions, anxiety, and distress. The careless and worldly approach without hesitation the most solemn rite of our holy religion, and make that service which only hardens their hearts, and fills them with pride and self-righteousness, a sort of passport to heaven; while a large body of professing Christains think the danger of receiving unworthily a sufficient reason for not coming at all.

The passage of Scripture on which the fears of men are principally founded, occurs in the 1st of Corinthians xi. 27—29: "Whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.—He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body."

The sin of the Corinthians had been before particularly specified. "In eating, every one taketh before other his own supper: and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What! have ye not houses to eat and to drink in? or despise ye the Church of God, and shame them that have not? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I praise you not."

You may here see what grievous and open disorders had crept into the Corinthian Church, and need not wonder at the strong expressions of the Apostle, describing the danger of their sin. They slighted the sacred rite which represented the Saviour's death; made no difference between it, and a common meal; and were guilty of excesses, even at the very time of its celebration. The way in which the Lord's Supper is now administered among us, renders such a glaring abuse of it impracticable, though it be still possible, in our temper and spirit, to fall into a measure of the same guilt.

It may be first expedient to show, WHAT IS NOT RECEIVING UNWORTHILY. He does not necessarily receive unworthily, who strongly feels his unworthiness; nor does it follow that he must have received unworthily, whose faith is weak. There may be many

doubts and fears, much trepidation and anxiety, and yet the heart be in the main right with God, and those distressing feelings may only arise from not fully understanding the riches of Christ, and the liberty of his Gospel. Nor yet does it show this, if we feel the power of indwelling sin: St. Paul could say, *in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing.* This feast is not for angels, but for men encompassed with infirmities. A coldness and dullness in our duties, which we lament, does not of itself show that we receive unworthily. Some are naturally dull and heavy; but, *if there be first a willing mind, it is accepted according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not.* Some think a mere remembrance of an injury, though without ill will, or many worldly troubles, or the hatred of some one, or if their heart have been little moved or affected during the solemnity, or they have been then much harassed or tempted, that they have therefore received unworthily; but this by no means follows, as this chapter, and various parts of this treatise will sufficiently show. Nor yet, if afterward we fall into sin or difficulty, does it necessarily show that unworthy receiving was the cause. Anxious minds often distress themselves needlessly on these points.

The word UNWORTHILY means, as the context plainly shows, in an unbecoming and unsuitable way; not with that design with which this feast was instituted by Christ, nor in a manner agreeable to its importance and dignity.*

As it respects indeed the PERSONS who receive, those who are living in wilful and allowed sin, those who are impenitent, and have not sought the mercy of God as poor and perishing sinners, by faith in Christ Jesus, have no suitable qualifications, and no scriptural encouragements, to go to the table of the Lord. Our

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* Ἀναξίως non eo consilio, quo hoc epulum a Christo est institutum, modo non convenienter dignitati et gravitati rei.—*Schleusner.*

Liturgy justly tells them, "Repent you of your sins, or else come not to that holy table."

He who makes no difference between the sacrament and a common meal, who looks not through the outward emblems, and does not by faith regard them as figures of the Saviour's body and blood, who trusts not in Christ's death, and has no love to him, and whose tempers towards his fellow creatures are unforgiving and malignant, he discerns not the Lord's body, and receives unworthily.

Nor is this a slight sin with trivial consequences—great guilt is contracted, and severe afflictions follow.

Great guilt is contracted. They are *guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.* In the full sense of the terms, this was the guilt of the Jews who crucified the Lord; in a secondary sense, of those nominal Christians who apostatize from the truth. But a measure even of this awful guilt, may be contracted by unworthily receiving the Lord's Supper. A person may thus manifest a contempt of the sacrifice of Christ, and be chargeable with a dreadful profanation of that sacred institution which brings it to our view.

If, Christian reader, you would shudder at the idea of imbruing your hands in the Saviour's blood, guard against any approach to so foul an iniquity. True it is, that even this is not unpardonable; for many even of the murderers of our Lord repented, and were saved. But surely no Christian can voluntarily slight the Saviour in the greatest instance of his love, with the notion that his amazing goodness may yet pardon this sin. When the question is asked, *Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?* he will ever reply with the holy Apostle, *God forbid!*

Severe afflictions have sometimes followed this guilt. The unworthy receiver *eateth and drinketh damnation to himself.* The term indeed means not, as some have needlessly distressed themselves, by supposing it does, eternal ruin; but it does imply the condemnation of their heavenly Father, the Divine displeasure and anger. That the Apostle means thus much with temporal chastisements for their sin, is

evident from what he afterwards says—"For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged; but when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." The Corinthians perhaps, migh attribute their sickness, and the deaths happening among them, to various natural causes; but an inspired Apostle tells them that these were sent upon them for their profanation of the Lord's Supper. Nay, we must go farther, and say, that supposing a person to continue to receive unworthily, instead of gaining any benefit, his heart will only become more hardened, and his soul in danger of eternal ruin. Indeed, however justly we may soften the words *eateth and drinketh damnation* into judgment or condemnation, there is still quite enough in them to deter the careless and presumptuous from heedlessly coming to this table.

But some may ask, How shall I avoid this danger? We add the following directions:—

Receive not IGNORANTLY. The Corinthians partook of the elements without discerning the Lord's body. Those err in a similar way, who do not consider the great end designed in the Lord's Supper, and do not look through the sign to the thing signified; as do those also who do not regard the sacrifice of the death of Christ, but go in a self-righteous spirit as if they were performing a meritorious duty. Do you then seek to understand the design of this ordinance, and to have right views of the atonement of Christ.

Receive not IRREVERENTLY. We are not indeed in danger now, of those tumultuous and irregular practices which prevailed at Corinth; but is there not, in the minds of some, a want of reverence and holy awe? Do we not sometimes come in a light and careless frame of mind, if not with an impenitent heart? As there is danger on one side of an excess of fear destroying the love and freedom of the child so there is on the other of failing in that due reverence, which is so suited to the state of sinful and dependent creatures, in all their dealings with their great Creator.

Receive not UNCHARITABLY. The rich Corinthians did not impart of their provisions to their poorer brethren, and thus were evidently deficient in Christian love. If we also entertain a haughty, injurious, and unforgiving spirit towards any human being, and especially towards any of our Christian brethren, we have a temper directly contrary to the spirit of this ordinance, we shall receive in an unsuitable way. *See that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently.*

Receive not WITH A CARNAL MIND. The Corinthians made their meeting together an occasion for excess and intemperance. Modern habits preclude this. Yet we may also receive with a carnal mind: many worldly passions may be at work; such as looking to see who is there; observing their dress and appearance, and forming worldly designs, when we ought to be engaged in the solemnity. The same carnal mind leads us to look only at the outward service, receiving without spirituality of mind, and without looking to, or confiding in Christ the Lord.

By giving these directions, it is not implied that any unallowed or lamented ignorance, irreverence, want of charity, or of spirituality, constitute the sin of unworthy receiving, but if these things are habitual and allowed, undoubtedly we have reason to fear that we have, in some measure, imbibed the spirit of that sin for which the Apostle reproved the Corinthians, and should, without delay, seek for pardoning mercy, and come afresh, and in a better spirit, to the Lord's Table. Even these Corinthians, though so justly and severely reproved by the Apostle for their former profane manner of communicating, yet so far from being dissuaded from coming again, must be supposed to be individually addressed in those words,—"Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup." For, though there be danger of unworthy receiving, there is a yet greater danger in wilfully neglecting this ordinance. It is always better to discharge a duty, even though it be done defectively, than to neglect it altogether. We find Hezekiah, when there were many of the people of Israel who eat

the passover otherwise than it was written, not being able, from the pressure of the time, to cleanse themselves, (2 Chron. xxx. 18,) confidently pleading in their behalf. It was the saying of a truly pious woman, "She had rather spoil ten duties, than omit one." Let no threatenings, against the mingling of sin with the discharge of your duty, lead you to neglect that duty, but rather lead you to a more conscientious and faithful discharge of the will of God.

CHAPTER IX.

On Preparation for the Lord's Supper.

It is very desirable not to enter on any spiritual service, with a careless and heedless mind; and the more solemn the duty is, the more needful and desirable is a due preparation for it. The common decencies of life, teach men that, when invited to the table of a monarch, or to associate with princes and their earthly superiors, they should appear with suitable marks of respect, and so behave as may best please and honour those who have invited them. Much more when invited to the nearest communion with the King of kings, should Christians seek so to act as may please him. If David under the Legal Dispensation, attending the sacrifice of a slain beast only, felt it right to say, *I will wash mine hands in innocency, and so will I compass thine altar, O Lord;* surely we, in commemorating the actual sacrifice of the Son of God, should make similar preparation. These general considerations are much strengthened, when we remember the danger of unworthy receiving, and the benefits of a due reception. We need not, however, merely infer the duty on these general grounds. There is an express direction of the Apostle—"Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup."

Preparation may be considered in two respects;

that which is requisite before our first reception of the Lord's Supper, and that which it is desirable to make whenever we afterwards receive. We will consider the first in this chapter, and the other in the second part of this treatise.

The time of first communicating is a critical period in a man's life, that may much affect his future communions, as well as his whole future life. If we then duly receive, it may be a blessing to us ever after.

With respect to the PERSONS who ought to communicate, we may notice, that to be a right partaker of the Lord's Supper, a man must be a SINCERE CHRISTIAN; one who is sensible that he is a fallen, sinful creature; feels the guilt and corruption of his own heart; has repented of his sins; knows that there is only one way of salvation, by faith in Christ; is looking to him for that salvation, and desires above all things to win Christ, and be found in him.

Bishop Taylor justly remarks, "He that is not freed from the dominion of sin, he that is not really a subject of the kingdom of grace, he in whose mortal body sin does reign, and the Spirit of God does not reign, must at no hand present himself before the holy table of the Lord—he is God's enemy, and therefore cannot receive his holy Son." The Lord's Supper is designed "for the strengthening and refreshing of the soul," and not for the first communication of spiritual life.

But as this is a point of some difficulty, and one which is generally left to each individual to decide for himself, it may be well to enter more into particulars.

As to OPEN SINNERS, the case is perfectly clear; every Christian concurs with the exhortation of our Church. "Therefore if any of you be a blasphemer of God, an hinderer or slanderer of his word, an adulterer, or be in malice, or envy, or in any other grievous crimes, repent you of your sins, or else come not to that holy table."

The primitive churches were very particular on this point. "Let no Judas," says Chrysostom, "no

lover of money be present at this table; he that is not Christ's disciple, let him depart from it. Let no inhuman, no cruel person, no uncompassionate man, or unchaste come hither. I speak this to you that administer, as well as to those that partake."

Indeed it is both prejudicial and unprofitable to the wicked. Just as the rain which falls upon a rock, does not penetrate, and soften, and fertilize it, but ever runs off from it; so the wicked, by their sinful and hard hearts, repel that gracious influence which would otherwise enter and bless their souls.

But while the case is clear as to open sinners, there is a large class of persons, in the main, of a moral character, but who manifestly have not that *spiritual mind which is life and peace*, who are *walking not after the spirit but after the flesh*, and we cannot recommend such persons, while in this state of mind, to go to this table. Let them *repent and believe the Gospel*, and then come. The graces of repentance, faith, humility, charity, and the like, are needful to a due reception of the Lord's Supper. Men are destitute of these by nature; and till the Holy Ghost be received, there are none of these evidences of spiritual life. Now if we give ever so much meat and drink to a dead man, it can neither bring him to life, nor nourish him; and so this holy ordinance cannot profit a man dead in sins, and without a spiritual appetite and spiritual dispositions.

Yet, on the other hand, it may be observed, for the comfort of humble Christians, who are sometimes in a great strait between a sense of their unfitness, and the obligation of a plain command, that this ordinance requires not perfection in any grace in those who come. If a man have but the very beginnings of holy dispositions, let him come to have them strengthened. The remarks of one of the Reformers on this point, may help the reader to come to a right decision. Speaking of those for whom this ordinance is intended, he says, "Let us remember, that this sacred banquet is medicine to the sick, comfort to the sinner, alms to the poor; but that it would confer no advantage on the

healthy, the righteous, and the rich, if any such could be found.—The best and only worthiness that we can present to God, is to offer him our vileness and unworthiness, that he may make us worthy of his mercy; to despair in ourselves, that we may find consolation in him; to humble ourselves, that we may be exalted by him: to accuse ourselves, that we may be justified by him." Speaking afterwards of the necessity of faith and charity, he says, "There are those who have fallen into a considerable error respecting the degree of these graces, requiring a perfection of faith to which nothing can approach, and a charity equal to that which Christ has manifested towards us. But by this requisition they exclude all men from access to this sacred supper. For if their opinion were admitted, no person could receive it but unworthily; since all, without a single exception, would be convinced of their imperfections. And surely it must betray extreme ignorance to require that in the reception of the Sacrament, which would render the Sacrament unnecessary and useless; for it was not instituted for the perfect, but for the imperfect and feeble; to awaken, excite, stimulate, and exercise their graces of faith and charity, and to correct the defects of both."

Let us now proceed to consider more particularly how we may prepare for that ordinance which the Lord has instituted.

A KNOWLEDGE OF ITS NATURE is in the first place requisite, that when we come to this table, we may *discern the Lord's body*. The previous chapter will have, we trust, given you sufficient information on this point. Read over yourselves those parts of Scripture which dwell on Christ's atonement, (as Isa. liii,) and his death, (as John xix,) the nature of the New Covenant, (as Heb. viii,) the accounts of this institution given in the Holy Scriptures, (Matt. xxvi. 26—30; Mark xiv. 22—26; Luke xxii. 15—20; 1 Cor. x. 16—18; xi. 17—34,) and our Lord's statements respecting the nature, necessity, and advantages of faith in him, John vi. 28—71. Remember, it is intended to bring to your remembrance Christ's death as a sacrifice,

taking away your sins; it represents that death to you; it instructs you in the nature and need of faith in him; it offers afresh his benefits to you; and, rightly received, assures you of your interest in them.

SELF-EXAMINATION AS TO THE STATE OF YOUR OWN MIND AND HEART, is another material point. By self-examination we mean a diligent search into the true state of our character, as it is in the sight of God, by comparing it with his holy word.

There are holy dispositions and tempers, there is a peculiar conduct and conversation, stated in the Holy Scriptures, as marking the character of all the children of God. And then, with more especial reference to our receiving the Lord's Supper, the intention of mind in going to this table should be examined. There may be wrong motives for going; as to obtain a religious character; from an idea of thereby meriting divine blessings; because others go; or, merely to gratify our friends. These are improper motives; and should be guarded against. We should be influenced to approach his holy table simply by a regard to the authority of Jesus Christ, and a desire to obtain, in the appointed means, his grace and blessing. There are, besides, qualifications and graces of the Holy Spirit, suitable for the due reception of the Lord's Supper. We should ascertain whether we possess these.

Our Church has, in its Catechism, given very plain and valuable instruction on the nature of the duty of self-examination; nor do I think that I can put the subject in a more instructive form, than by bringing that before you. In answer to the question, "What is required of them who come to the Lord's Supper?" we are told, "To examine themselves whether they repent them truly of their former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life, have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his death, and be in charity with all men." This answer shows us that we should examine whether we do in reality possess that repentance, faith, gratitude, and charity, which are necessary to our receiving the

Lord's Supper with spiritual benefit. A few observations will now be made on those points, for the purpose of assisting you in your examination.

Inquire, then, as to your REPENTANCE. Do you know your exceeding sinfulness before God? You cannot repent of your sins without knowing them; nor can you know them, but as you are acquainted with the word of God. *By the law is the knowledge of sin.* It is from ignorance of the holy law of God, that we hear so many say—they are not great sinners—they are not worse than others—and they have never done any thing particularly wrong. Even when they admit they are sinners in general, they will not confess that they are guilty of any one particular transgression, nor do they feel that they daily come short of the glory of God. Alas! such know not God's perfect law, and are wholly ignorant of themselves. They may know the character of thousands around them; they may know the histories of thousands of years of every country; but they know not what is to them the most important of all, the history of their own hearts, and their own lives. We are not only sinners in general, but we never did one thing wholly free from sin. We are born in a sinful world, prone to iniquity from our earliest years, and through the whole course of our lives we have been offending God. Every day, from our rising up to our lying down, in many things we offend. For what is sin? not merely what man will acknowledge to be wrong, nor what human laws punish; but sin is what God says is wrong. "Sin is the transgression of the law of God." What says that law? It requires us to love God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves. It calls us *to be spiritually minded.* It tells us, "whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God." The bare recital of these things will show us, if we are duly conscious of our state, that there is not a day, nor an hour, in which we do not fall short of God's requirements, and sin in his sight. The reasonableness of God's law, his tender grace and mercy, redemption by Jesus Christ, the proffered aid of the Holy Spirit, and the long-suffering and forbear-

ance of God, are all powerful and plain arguments why we should keep his commandments, and they therefore aggravate our disobedience. In inquiring, then, as to the reality of our repentance, each of us should ask himself—What are my thoughts of my sin? Do they grieve me as being committed against God? Have I another thought of sin to what I once had? Do I loathe and hate sin as the worst of all evils? Have I thus an habitual mourning for sin? a broken and contrite heart? It is the first work of the Holy Spirit to convince us of sin, have I sought the gift of that Spirit?

Our repentance, if sincere, will be proved by "steadfast purposes to lead a new life." Has the conviction, then, of your sinfulness, led you to see your need of a new heart and a new spirit, without which you can never lead a new life? Under a deep conviction of the infinite importance of fleeing from the wrath to come, have you determined to do so? Have you, in retirement, seriously reflected on these things? Have you, in short, come to a deliberate and solemn resolution to give yourself up to God? Your examination as to this point should include not only an inquiry as to *godly sorrow for sin*, but as to the determination to *walk in newness of life*.

Another material subject of inquiry is, as to your FAITH. Have you a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ? Has the conviction of your sinfulness led you to seek, as a poor and lost sinner, those mercies which are treasured up in Christ Jesus? It is only those who know and trust in Christ the Saviour, that are in a state of meetness for the Lord's Supper. And here you have need to watch against self-deception. Many think that they have faith in Christ when they have it not. If we were to ask them, Do you believe in Christ? they would be ready to take offence at the question, and to reply, "Do you take me for an infidel! I am a Christian, and of course believe in him." But, alas! this is not of course. Would to God that all that are called Christians were trusting in Christ Jesus! Real faith is not, as you will have seen in a

former chapter, a mere uninfluential assent of the understanding to the truths of Christianity; but such a belief of the Gospel as leads us to a daily and hourly trusting in Christ for a supply of all our necessities.* It does not only produce a mere outward profession of Christianity, but a reliance on Christ as our Saviour, a personal reliance on him for ourselves, a coming to him individually in our own case, as our Teacher, and an obedience to him as our Governor. There is another very common error, that of trusting in a vague notion that God is merciful and all will be well. Is this a *lively* faith in God's mercy *through Christ*? far from it. Let not a mere idle fancy, or uncertain notion like this, built on no solid foundation, satisfy you.—You want a lively faith, a faith that leads you to rely on the Saviour, that influences the heart, moves the affections, and excites us to work for God; and yet renounces all hope but in Christ Jesus, as the channel through which every blessing flows, the treasury of spiritual riches, and the fountain of every good. Inquire, then, Where am I fixing my hopes? On whom

* The nature of faith may be illustrated by the following circumstance. In the late winters in London, when distress has been general, a place was fitted up for the reception of the houseless poor. Bills were pasted up in different parts of the town, directing persons where to find this refuge. Many read them out of mere curiosity, and fully assented to the truth of the fact, and thought nothing more about it; but the poor and destitute read them as having a deep interest in them, as a guide to direct them where to go for food, and lodging, and all they needed. Is our faith in God's word such as this? Does it lead us to Christ? The same image will farther illustrate this subject. If any who were poor and destitute read the bills to which we have alluded, but did not believe them, or thought that if they applied *they* would not be accepted; or if they did not come, because they loved better to prowl about in the streets, practise violence, and commit licentiousness; such persons act the very same part with unbelievers in Christ, who may acknowledge the truth of what the Gospel declares, but still do not individually come to Christ for the blessings which he has promised to those who apply to him.

do I depend for salvation? Is it not in part on my own goodness, my own prayers and endeavours? You must indeed strive, and labour, and pray, or you will never be saved; but even if you did all required, you are an unprofitable servant; and with our many old transgressions, we are also but as condemned criminals. God's mercies in Christ are our only refuge. "So far as you think of doing any thing, call it what you may, with a hope of being pardoned and justified for its sake, so far you reject the only way of salvation, (Rom. iii. 4, 5,) and have reason to expect your portion with unbelievers." We must fix every hope in the atonement of Christ; then we shall discern the Lord's body, we shall eat his flesh, and drink his blood, and be in a prepared state of mind duly to improve this ordinance.

We should farther inquire as to our GRATITUDE. Have we a thankful remembrance of the death of our gracious Redeemer? If your mind is awakened to a due sense of your sinfulness and ruin, and enlightened with a knowledge of the way of salvation by Christ Jesus, then the next point of inquiry should be—"Is the love of God shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost?" "Am I ever ready to say, Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift?" Contemplate for a moment that wonderful love of God, which, before time began, planned the way of salvation. Contemplate the way in which this love was manifested. The eternal Word, the Lord of Glory, *was made flesh and dwelt among us.* Consider how much it cost. God *spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.*—Contemplate the amazing benefits, pardon, peace, salvation, and eternal life, which thereby came to us; and then you may better judge what a thankful remembrance we ought to have. Ask yourselves, then, Have these things deeply affected my heart? Have they kindled within me any warm emotions of gratitude, and called forth my devout thanksgivings? If we love Christ, we shall think much of Christ. Those things concerning which our thoughts most abound, mark the state of the soul. Dr. Owen remarks, "Let

a man profess what he will, if his thoughts are generally conversant about worldly and sensual things, he has an earthly and worldly mind; as he thinks, so he is; there is the image and likeness of the soul. If then we are affected with the love of Christ, it will beget in our souls many thoughts of Christ, in our lying down, and in our rising up, in our ways, on our occasions, as well as in ordinances. If indeed our hearts are affected with the love of Christ, our thoughts of Christ will abound, and those thoughts will work again on our affections, and conform us more and more to the image of Christ." Inquire thus, if gratitude for the gift and love of a dying Saviour be a permanent and prevailing feeling in your mind, inducing you to forsake those things which would displease God, and zealously to seek his glory. It is in this view you go to his table, saying with David, "I will come into thy house in the multitude of thy mercy!"

There is yet another very important subject of inquiry—What is your LOVE TO MAN? Are you in charity with all men. The greatest knowledge, a faith that could work miracles, and the most excellent gifts, are all vain without charity. This love to man is of such importance, that our Lord gives an express rule, equally applicable here as to the Jewish sacrifices, and doubtless principally designed for the use of the Christian Church—"If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there remember est that thy brother hath ought against thee,* leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." Matt. v. 23. An un-

* Augustine notices a point here, which, as it may relieve the anxiety of a timid mind, I gladly insert: he says, "the precept is, if we call to mind that our brother has ought against us: that is, if we have any way injured him, for then it is that he has something against us. For if he have injured us, then we have something against him; in which case there is no occasion to go to him for reconcilement. You would not ask pardon of the man who has done you an injury It is sufficient that you forgive him as you desire forgiveness."

forgiving temper, and a prevailing spirit of selfishness, a spirit of enmity and ill will even towards our worst enemies, are utterly unsuitable to this solemn occasion. Inquire then, whether you really love your fellow men, and what proofs you have of this love. Do you make sacrifices of your own ease, and will, and comforts, for them? Are you kind and tender hearted, ready to forgive, and abounding in works of mercy? Are you liberal towards the destitute, gentle towards the froward, forbearing towards the impatient and irritating, and kind and loving to your enemies? Are you pitying and praying for the ungodly? Are you delighting in and doing good to the pious? In short, you should inquire, Have I that charity *which suffereth long and is kind, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things*?

A close examination on these subjects is calculated to produce that humble mind and contrite spirit, and that sense of sinfulness and weakness which are most especially adapted to the advantageous reception of the Lord's Supper. Who can question himself on all these points, without seeing his own sinfulness? But be not too much discouraged by such a review; remember, the real desire after the grace of God is a sign that you have a measure of that grace already.

Meditation is both an important and a profitable part of preparation. We should think much, and deeply, if we would derive much benefit. Our chief attention should be directed to the sufferings of our Saviour. If those portions of Scripture which describe his sufferings, as the 22d Psalm, the 53d of Isaiah, and the latter chapters in the four Gospels, are carefully perused, and dwelt on in patient and deliberate meditation, our minds will receive some holy impressions, some convictions of the evil of sin, and some lively sense of the love of Christ. Dr. Owen advises, that our meditation should be regulated by our peculiar present condition. Suppose, for instance, the soul is pressed with a sense of the guilt of any sin, or of many sins, let your preparatory meditation be fixed on the grace of God and the love of Jesus Christ, as proved

to the very utmost degree by his death. This is suited to give relief to your mind. Do you lament that you have not a just feeling of the evil of sin? let your meditation be principally directed to the great guilt of sin as represented in the cross, and to the severity of God against it as there manifested.*

Judas Hale counted it a means of preventing wanderings, and fixing his mind, to commit his meditations to writing; and there would doubtless be much advantage in putting down those thoughts which most affect your own heart.

But after all our efforts, let us ever bear in mind, the true preparation of the heart is from God alone; earnest PRAYER is therefore here both our privilege and our duty. All the gifts and qualifications which we need, come only from God; and he gives them, and ordinarily gives them only, to those whose hearts he inclines to seek them in prayer. The more earnest, and serious, and full our prayers are, the greater blessings we are likely to receive.

Perhaps to knowledge, self-examination, meditation, and prayer, may be added, EXPECTATION, or a looking and hoping for the blessing connected with this ordinance. In general, in proportion as we expect the fulfilment of God's promises, so shall we receive, in God's good time and way. We should inquire, What may I hope to receive? We should expect a more lively manifestation of the Divine presence, a more sensible communion with him, an increase of the hope of his glory, and the like. Before our Lord healed the two blind, he required them to believe in his ability to do so, and *then touched he their eyes, saying, according to your faith be it unto you.*

The discharge of this duty of preparation requires some STATED TIME. Mr. Earle remarks,† "It concerns me to prepare, that I may be a welcome guest, and a worthy receiver. To prepare! though the expression be short, it is comprehensive, and I shall find

* Some helps to meditation are added in the second part.

† See Earle's Sacramental Exercises.

it implies more work than can be crowded into a little time, or done with a little pains. Let me therefore redeem some time from my business, or at least from my pleasures, before the week be far advanced, that unforeseen occurrences may not deprive me of an opportunity to dress my soul for the glorious solemnity, and put me upon the unhappy plunge of missing the feast, or wanting the wedding garment." There is much truth in these remarks, yet it may well be doubted, whether it be expedient, to make so much of a given time for preparation, as to hinder Christians from that which was the primitive plan—frequent communion. Some have time at their command, others have not; and the period of time to be given to the duty of preparation will vary accordingly. But in general most persons might, were they in earnest, give some stated and uninterrupted time to this great work. It has been observed, "your profiting will for the most part be proportioned to the diligence with which you prepare." It may also be remarked, that in all cases, much time may be saved by watchfulness to improve opportunities. By edifying conversation, particularly in going to and returning from church, we may redeem time. Remember, our Saviour notices what passes in mutual discourses. "What manner of communications are these that ye have to one another as ye walk?"

Be not discouraged as if you were to be perfect before you go; this very Institution is designed as a help for your imperfection and weakness. "If we were perfect we should not need it." Guard also against two opposite evils, self-righteous formality in preparation, and slothful self-indulgence in neglecting to prepare. As to self-righteous views of ourselves, it was a remark of Luther's—"Never are men more unfit than when they think themselves most fit, and best prepared for their duty; never more fit than when most humbled and ashamed in the sense of their own unfitness." We must not rest on the exactness of our preparation whatever it may have been, but come only in the name of Jesus. There is a tendency also in our

minds, to be very careful not to sin before we receive the Lord's Supper, and afterwards to be too careless about sinning. Let us watch against this self-righteous spirit, while we foster and cherish those more serious and devout thoughts, and those greater longings after Christ and his blessings which we may experience at that time.

Seek to prepare in dependence on the grace of God, and as his appointed means for obtaining a blessing, and such a preparation will discover to you more of your sinful and lost condition; and thus the atonement of Christ, and the gift of his Holy Spirit, will be unspeakably precious to you, and you will go to his table hungering and thirsting after righteousness. Then, in partaking of the memorials of his death, you will receive the pledges of his love, and the assurance of your interest in his great salvation. You will enjoy communion with him and his people, and probably gain some foretaste of those superior pleasures which are at his right hand for evermore.

CHAPTER X.

On the Benefits connected with a due Reception of the Lord's Supper.

THE performance of each of the duties to which our Lord calls his people, is attended with many advantages; as it regards all his statutes, *in keeping of them there is great reward.* It is so in this duty. While he calls us to remember him, to show forth his death, and to manifest our expectation of his coming again; in the faithful discharge of this duty, our souls obtain the most important benefits.

It is the general mistake of a mere outward professor of religion, and one to which our fallen nature, even in the best of men, has a continual tendency, to put the means of grace in the place of grace itself.

Thus if the nominal Christian read the Scriptures, he congratulates himself on having performed a work of piety, without considering that they should mainly be read as the means of conforming the soul to the divine image; of quickening and directing it in the good ways of God. So if he prays to God, he rests in self-satisfaction with the mere act of prayer, without regarding it in its true light, as a principal means of obtaining help from God for our many spiritual necessities. The same dangerous mistake is made by such persons respecting the Lord's Supper. They are ready to suppose that when they have prepared for it by a course of duties, and have received it in the appointed way, that then they have done all that is required, forgetting that it is a means for a farther end—advancement in piety.

The view of its benefits may be comprehended under the general term, A MEAN OF GRACE; a method appointed of God for communicating his grace, whether it refer to the actual enjoyment, or the due improvement of that grace.

It is not indeed appointed as a means to convey grace merely by the outward receiving of it, without suitable dispositions, and as a sort of charm. Neither are we to suppose God will pardon or save any, for their mere coming to it. "God does not seem to have bound himself to this or any other ordinance in such a manner, that the immediate influences of his grace should necessarily be connected with it. We cannot say that he has thus invariably tied himself to it, nor does experience agree with such a notion; but, in a regular attendance upon it, we may expect that God will meet and bless us."

It may be considered with reference to its bringing to our recollection a past transaction, and its being a means of both enjoying benefits at the present time, and furnishing a pledge of future blessings.

1. IT BRINGS TO OUR RECOLLECTION A PAST TRANSACTION. It deeply impresses on our hearts the fact of the death of Christ for sin; an event which it is of the utmost moment that we should never forget; an

event which can never be affectionately remembered by the Christian without much advantage. We have seen that the bread and wine are apt figures of the Saviour's body which was broken, and of his blood which was shed for us. What is made visible and tangible, and obvious to all our senses, has naturally a greater effect upon us, than what is merely addressed to our understandings, or only treasured up in our memory. We are indeed too apt to rest in the outward sign, so that it was desirable that the sign should only be such a resemblance as may direct our minds to the thing signified, and for this end the emblems here used are peculiarly adapted.

By this sacrament, then, the remembrance of our Saviour's death is preserved with all its freshness in our minds; and the blessings connected with that remembrance are thus bestowed upon us. It was not that he might gain our admiration and praise that our Lord appointed this ordinance; he needs not honour from man, for all the hosts of heaven worship him. But by this representation of his death, we ourselves are both edified and comforted. "Come here," says Henry, "and see the victories of the cross. Christ's wounds are thy healing, his agonies thy repose, his conquests thy conflicts, his groans thy songs, his pains thine ease, his shame thy glory, his death thy life, his sufferings thy salvation." And do not such recollections tend to produce mingled emotions of holy sorrow and joy, cordial hatred of sin, and ardent love to Christ? We might enlarge on this part of the subject, had it not been in some measure anticipated in the preceding chapter, on the design of this Institution.

2. We should, however, have only a very inadequate view of its benefits, if we merely consider those which it has a natural tendency to produce, in bringing to our recollection the death of Christ; it must be regarded as a divinely-appointed MEANS OF ENJOYING SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS AT THE PRESENT TIME. "Its chief excellence is, that it is not only a figure and resemblance of our living on a crucified Saviour, but also a precious instrument whereby Christ, the bread

and drink of life, is really conveyed to us, and received by us through faith. Hereby God exhibits and gives forth Christ and his salvation to true believers, and stirs up and strengthens them to receive and feed upon Christ, by present actings of faith, while they partake of the outward elements."

The Apostle, speaking on this subject, states, "the cup of blessing* which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one bread, and one body; for we are all partakers of that one bread." 1 Cor. x. 16, 17. This passage will furnish us with a scriptural guide as to the benefits to be expected at the Lord's table. By communion (κοινωνια,) is meant a participation, a communication or enjoyment of the body and blood of Christ.

In order then rightly to discern the benefits which we obtain, we must consider what were the blessings obtained for us by the incarnation and death of Christ. His death obtained our PARDON; his blood being *shed for the remission of sins.* Through that blood we obtain the blessing of JUSTIFICATION, and are accounted righteous before God; *being justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.* The same sacrifice procures our PEACE, as St. Paul shows at length, Eph. ii. 13—17. Again, *we receive the promise of* THE SPIRIT *through faith* in him. Gal. iii. 14; John vii. 39. The gift of ETERNAL LIFE also comes in the same way—*God hath given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.* These, with many other blessings

* The sacramental cup seems called the cup of blessing, in allusion to the cup of wine used after the passover, to which the Jews gave this name. They called it so on account of the general blessings of God's providence, and of their redemption from Egypt. Christians have far more reason to call it the cup of blessing, as commemorating infinitely greater benefits. This cup is blessed, as it is set apart and consecrated to a holy use, even to be a memorial and symbol of the blood of Christ.

which might be mentioned, we obtain by the death of Christ.

Now the real believer, through the mercy of God, in the right reception of the Lord's Supper, has the present enjoyment of those benefits which were obtained by the sacrifice of Christ, and the strengthening of those graces, in the exercise of which that enjoyment is communicated. Thus the Lord's Supper is calculated to give him an assured hope that the blessings of redemption belong to him, as well as to increase his faith, and to advance his sanctification. It also affords him many social advantages. But, remember, that every blessing obtained here, as well as elsewhere, comes from the mercy of God alone, and through the influences of the Holy Spirit freely given according to his own grace. If we depend only on the means, we may lose the blessing. If we use the means, looking up to the Lord for his promised grace therein, we shall most probably obtain the spiritual good which we desire, for the means are both adapted and appointed to produce that good.

The believer, then, may obtain here AN ASSURED HOPE THAT THE BLESSINGS OF REDEMPTION BELONG TO HIM.* To have the communion of the body and blood of Christ is, in truth, to have pardon, justification, peace, the Holy Spirit, the gift of eternal life, and *all spiritual blessings in heavenly things in Christ Jesus.* Now the Apostle's question in the passage already quoted, (1 Cor. x. 16, 17,) shows that the Lord's Supper is a divinely-appointed means for believers having that communion. By the exercises of faith at the Lord's Table, therefore, we have the blessings of redemption assured to us, and thus really partake of his body and blood in that way in which only they can be received. When in a journey on a winter's

* Our Church leads those who worship according to her ritual to say of the due reception of the Lord's Supper, to our Heavenly Father—"Thou dost assure us thereby of thy favour, and goodness towards us." See Observations on this Prayer, chap. i. part. ii. of this Treatise.

day, we are favoured with a clear sky, and a shining sun, we say, "we have the sun with us:" by which we mean the light, warmth, and comfort of his beams; so when the Apostle says we have in the Lord's Supper *the communion of the body* and *blood of Christ*, he shows that the benefits of his sacrifice are enjoyed by us. As certainly as the true believer takes the bread and wine, and feeds on them in remembrance of Christ's death, so assuredly do the spiritual blessings obtained by that sacrifice belong to him; and the very ordinance is calculated to give him this happy assurance of faith. It has been well remarked,* "Here we often, like Moses from Mount Pisgah, get extended views of the promised land. Here the mourning saints find joy, the weary rest, the dejected encouragement, and the strong increasing confidence. Here the spirit of faith applies the atonement, and the sense of reconciliation fills our souls *with joy unspeakable, and full of glory.* Christ intends his people should be comforted, should abound in all spiritual joy, and come to a feast, where *gladness is sown for the upright in heart.*" In partaking of this feast our souls are strengthened and refreshed by new views of our interest in Christ, and a fresh and lively communion with him.†

It is, however, by no means intended to be stated that these comforts are invariably connected with the right reception of the Lord's Supper, or that the communicant has not acceptably received it, who has not felt this *full assurance of hope;* (Heb. vi. 11;) all we intend is, that it is a blessing which the ordinance is designed and calculated to communicate, and which believers do in favoured seasons experience. But where so full a blessing is not given, there are yet benefits which are more generally and more constantly obtained. Thus faith, which is the very root of an

* See Haweis' Spiritual Communicant.

† The subject of communion with Christ as one especial benefit of the Lord's Supper, demands distinct consideration, and will be noticed in a subsequent chapter.

assured hope, and the spirit of holiness, which is the only certain or safe evidence that our hope is well grounded, are here greatly nourished and strengthened.

The grace of FAITH, the root of all other graces, is specially assisted and INCREASED by a due partaking of the Lord's Supper; for this institution is not only the outward sign of the Christian's feeding on Christ through faith, but a most efficacious means to help us to grow in this vital principle of the Christian's life. We must have, indeed, the beginning of faith, (if I may use the expression,) before we go. But faith is a grace of different degrees of strength. There is a *little*, a *weak*, and a *strong* faith; and the weak in faith must be received as a Christian brother, and in time his faith may become strong.

The whole service here is peculiarly calculated to strengthen our faith in Christ, the only Saviour. Bishop Taylor remarks, "Though we are to believe before we receive these symbols of Christ's death, yet, as by loving we love more, and by the acts of patience we increase in the spirit of mortification; so, by believing, we believe more, and by publication of our confession, we are made confident." The ordinance leads us throughout, to fix our minds steadfastly and deliberately on Jesus Christ, and him crucified, the proper object of our faith; and all things tend to beget the fullest confidence in the grace of Christ, and the love of our Heavenly Father.

The Lord's Supper, also, tends to PROMOTE OUR SANCTIFICATION. This is a point of vast importance, and one to which all that are in the habit of attending regularly at its celebration, will cordially give testimony. What Christian has not found the blood of Christ, as here manifested and applied, *purging the conscience from dead works to serve the living God:* the death of Christ becoming the spring of love, gratitude, and holy obedience? In a believing and vivid recollection of his atonement, the supply of the spirit of Christ is largely given, both to subdue our corruptions and strengthen our graces. Our separation from

worldly vanities thus become more easy and more resolute, and our devotion to God more steady and more decided. It has been illustrated by the advantages of a lock on a canal, which raises the vessel and enables it to begin a new course on a higher stream, and thus it is carried over what would otherwise obstruct its course.

The due attendance on this means of grace will be accompanied by a manifest growth in humility, delighting in God, and doing good. Our spirit will become more meek, and tender, and heavenly. Just as when a sick man, through taking a medicine exactly suited to his disease, begins to recover from his disorder, his appetite returns, his recently enervated limbs are renewed with fresh strength, his late pallid cheeks catch again the glow of health, he moves about afresh with freedom, and goes to his work with alacrity and vigour, feeling more than ever the blessings of health from having been confined to his habitation and his sick room. So, when at the Lord's Table, we receive "the healthful spirit of God's grace," we *hunger and thirst after righteousness*, we are raised up to new vigour in the spiritual life, we walk again with God, and go to our daily duties with fresh zeal and devotion. In short, all those holy dispositions which mark the character of Christians, are here cherished by the most effective motives. Our sense of the evil of sin is quickened, our penitence is deepened, and our love to the Saviour, and those for whom he died, is enlivened.

Thus, in these various ways, it is an appointed means of obtaining a richer enjoyment of spiritual benefits, and a higher assurance that they belong to us, and when rightly used the blessing attends the means.

The blessings of which we have spoken are indeed communicated to believers in prayer, and reading and hearing the Holy Scriptures, and the like; and also in the exercise of grace without external and ordinary means: nor is God confined to any means; but let us ever remember that he has appointed this means also; we cannot expect his blessing in any thing else, if we

neglect his appointments; and it is practically found by humble Christians, to be a most efficacious way of gaining spiritual blessings.

Christians have also here many SOCIAL ADVANTAGES. —They have the benefit of communion with their fellow Christians. "For we being many are one bread, for we are all partakers of that one bread."* The formation of the bread and of the wine, illustrate the intimate union of Christians. As the loaf is formed of many grains of wheat, so the people of Christ, however once distinct from each other, by the uniting bond of the Gospel, become connected together in the most intimate and close union. As the wine in the cup is formed of the juice of many grapes, which are all blended together, and thus the various juices become mingled and lost in one, so are the once distinct and varied minds and hearts of Christians united together in Christ Jesus; they have *fellowship one with another.*

The communion of saints is a cheering and delightful subject, tending, the more it is practically considered and experimentally felt, to draw the hearts of Christians nearer to each other. There is a relationship between man and man, effected by the Gospel of our Saviour, stronger than any merely earthly ties; there is a union, closer even than that which subsists in the members of the same body. "As the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is Christ.—So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another." The head of the body is Christ; and all his people, whether in heaven or in earth, are members of that body. At the Lord's Table we enjoy this communion. The church is here seen as a compact body. We gather courage and strength from the sight of our fellow Christians. Our mutual intercourse, profession, and

* The term εἷς ἄρτος, rendered *one bread*, may be rendered *one loaf*, describing more strikingly the union of Christians.

devotion, animate and stir up each other. One holy sympathy of feeling pervades and runs through the whole company of devout communicants. We become interested in each other's prayers; we sympathize in each other's sorrows; we partake of each other's joys; we are travelling the same road; we have the same enemies and friends; the same difficulties and comforts; the same sorrows and joys. And when Christians thus meet in love, who will not say—"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!"

It is true, that this communion, as well as the benefits which have been already considered, is perceived in other means of grace; in the intercourse of private life, in Christian conversation, in mutual prayer, and the exercises of charity: but it is especially and peculiarly enjoyed in this ordinance, which is eminently calculated to unite us together as showing our common dependence on the death of the same Saviour, our common participation of his grace, our common hope of his glory.

3. We have only farther to notice among the benefits of the Lord's Supper, that a right reception of it is a PLEDGE, earnest, or foretaste of FUTURE BLESSINGS. The appointed words of the Institution—"Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you," cannot imply less than that the true believer, when he receives the sacred elements, receives a pledge and assurance of the favour of him by whose appointment these words are addressed to him. One of the reformers says—"By commanding us to *take*, he signifies that he is ours; by commanding us to *eat* and *drink*, he signifies that he is become one with us." As the rainbow in the heavens is a token of the covenant between God and the earth, that he will no more destroy all flesh by a flood, and that man may multiply and replenish the earth: so this ordinance may be to us as a token, that God has by a better covenant, provided a deliverance for us, from a far worse destruction, and obtained for us a heavenly inheritance. The very appointment of this Institution by our gracious Re-

deemer, and its administration to us by his ministers, as they assure us that he is willing to be the food of our souls, and joined to us as a source and support of spiritual life, strength and consolation, so they afford us the lively hope that he will never leave us nor forsake us.

Indeed, when holy affections are here excited, and communion with Christ and his people here enjoyed, these things manifest that we have received that gift of the Holy Spirit, which is *the earnest of our inheritance*. As the Lord's Supper is peculiarly calculated to increase faith, hope, and love; so if you can thereby trace in yourselves stronger evidences of *the work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ*, your confidence will be increased, that he *which hath begun a good work in you, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ*.

We have seen what the blessings of the new covenant are, and what the hope of glory is which it sets before us. Is it a small advantage then, to have such a hope strengthened and confirmed by this pledge of God's favour? Does not *he who has this hope purify himself as he is pure?*

The due reception of the Lord's Supper is thus one of the most effective means of preparation for the second coming of Christ. Never are we more ready for the immediate presence of our Lord, than when, with a broken and contrite spirit, with a lively faith in his death, with ardent gratitude for his unspeakable mercies, and warm love to our fellow-creatures, we have been remembering Christ at his table. We come from it kind, gentle, and tender-hearted; our souls burn with the pure flame of holy love; we long to spend our whole strength in our Saviour's service; we delight in the exercise of devotion, and we have sensible communion with the Father of spirits; in short, a blessed anticipation and foretaste of the future bliss. There is that grace imparted through this most expressive ministration of the Gospel of our Saviour, which purifies and refines us, makes us meet for the heavenly inheritance, raises us above the love of this

world and the fear of death, and almost inclines us to adopt Simeon's words—"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." It is only the Gospel that is efficacious through the grace of God to sweeten life, and console in death; to make us happy here, and blessed for ever hereafter; and no where has the Christian a more perceptible and lively exhibition of the Gospel, than in this ordinance.

It may be useful to add a few remarks of a more general nature on this subject.

The reader will have seen that all those blessings which the Scriptures promise to faith in Christ, and the possession of Christ, do in fact belong to the faithful communicant. The reason is obvious: no one can duly receive the Lord's Supper, but as he believes in Christ and rests all on him. "There are all that the Scriptures say of the riches, and blessings, and treasures, which faith in Christ, as our Redeemer, can procure to us; ALL THAT they say of the benefit of that faith which is absolutely required by, and will be exercised in, the due reception of this Sacrament."

Many Christians do not expect enough at the Lord's Table, and thence lose much of the benefits to be there obtained. We should have a large expectation, and we shall receive large. We might justly suppose the great God to address the believing communicant—*ask what I shall give thee* (1 Kings iii. 5;) and to urge him farther—*open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it.* Ps. lxxxi. 10. Here we may have the nearest approaches to the Divine presence, that our state in this world admits. The church may say of this means of grace—"While the king sitteth at his table, my spikenard sendeth forth the smell thereof." Cant. i. 12. There is a blessed manifestation of the Divine presence to the soul to be here expected. View this ordinance in its true blessedness and glory, and you will justly have enlarged views of the benefits to be derived from it. Real believers may here look for abiding peace of conscience, strength of grace, joy in the Holy Ghost, and overflowing hopes of future

blessedness. "It is therefore the fault of many to come rather like prisoners to the bar, than like children and friends to the table; they come trembling and full of confusion. Their apprehension of the danger of receiving unworthily runs into an extreme, so as to become an hinderance to the exercise of faith, hope, and love."

To what has been said respecting the benefits of the Lord's Supper, it is, as has already been cursorily noticed, sometimes objected, "I have been there several times, and seemed to get no benefit." This is a subject which calls for more particular consideration here, as it may remove a difficulty from the minds of humble Christians, and make those who are careless and worldly, sensible that they are wrong."

We allow that all who partake of the Lord's Supper, do not receive these blessings. It has long since been stated by our church, "The wicked, and such as be void of a lively faith, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth, as St. Augustine saith, the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ; yet in no wise are they partakers of Christ, but rather to their condemnation do eat and drink the sign and sacrament of so great a thing." Those also, who receive it merely as a matter of form and custom, or as a self-righteous act to do away past transgressions, without any real hatred of sin, faith in Christ, or love to him; and with perhaps a secret reserve that they may afterwards go on more freely in sin; some slighting it as a common matter, and others over estimating the outward service, as having a power which was never given it, of atoning for their sins; these communicants do not gain the benefits which have been described, just as a formal worshipper gains none of the blessings of true prayer.

Do you then find that you have gained no benefit? Ask yourself a few questions of this kind—Have I ever really repented of my sins and turned to God? If you have no spiritual life, you are not in a state to benefit by an ordinance which is designed for the Christian's growth and nourishment.—Have I duly

prepared for this ordinance? Perhaps you were engaged in worldly business, when this greater business might, and should, have occupied your mind. Were you not at work, when you should have been in your closet; or reading some book on indifferent subjects, when you should have been searching the Scriptures; or enjoying yourself in your family, or with your friends, when you should have been alone? But possibly you did give a considerable time to preparation: inquire then, farther—Have I not rested in my preparation, and expected a blessing for it, rather than for Christ? No preparation must be trusted in, or put in the place of Jesus; if so, no good will be received. Or, inquire again—Is there any secret sin indulged in my life? Israel could not prosper in the war, on account of Achan's wickedness; nor will you prosper in your spiritual welfare, till your easily-besetting sin is resisted and mortified.

But those who, in humility and seriousness, make the objection which we have been considering, probably have received real, though not sensible benefit. What was the nature of the benefit which you expected? Perhaps you looked for a great deal of comfort and joy when you went, and you returned depressed, broken-hearted, and humbled. But is not that very spirit in which you returned, a real benefit? Isa. lvii. 15. "If you do not come away with a rejoicing heart, yet, if you come away with a weeping eye," bless God for that mercy. And though you found neither sorrow nor joy, but a distressing deadness, dulness, and coldness, during the whole service, yet perhaps subsequently you manifested more of the *peaceable fruits of righteousness*; possibly you enjoyed the next season of public worship more, or you felt under new obligations to a life of circumspection and holiness; and undoubtedly these were real benefits. God is not confined to our notions of times and seasons, nor to our way of giving his blessings; but infinite in his wisdom, and boundless in his love, he gives them as will best promote our highest good. But still you say, you are distressed under the mortification of disap-

pointed expectation. Were you not unwarrantably expecting a certain sort of spiritual luxury, the luxury of excited feelings; and need you wonder in this case that you find yourself, after receiving, dull and insensible? God deals thus with you, in kindness, for your real good. But do you ask, What is now my duty? A time of darkness is the time for faith; let such a one *trust in the name of the Lord, and stay on his God;* a time of disappointment is the time for resignation and submission to the will of God. But, after all, we would advise you not to judge of yourself merely by sensible feelings. The benefits are here to be expected, in a patient and persevering use of the appointed means; as in the case of prayer, or other means of grace for the food of the soul: or as in food, medicine, or other means of health to the body. But be assured, if you return with one additional proof of obedience to the will of God, one pious resolution confirmed, one vicious propensity checked; if humility be in any measure advanced, faith at all strengthened, love in any degree enlarged, or hope enlivened, or any Christian grace or temper increased; you have not received without benefit.

Yet, in all, remember God acts as a JUST and a GRACIOUS SOVEREIGN. We are unworthy creatures, and deserve nothing from him. By our sins, even in using the appointed means, we forfeit all claim to the benefit. If he refuses to give, we must hide our faces in the dust, acknowledging his justice, and our unworthiness. If he gives any blessing, all the praise and glory belong to the riches of his grace.

In closing this chapter, another point calls for attention. The ministers of Christ are often sent for to administer the Lord's Supper to the sick and the dying. In some cases, those who send, seem to think it a kind of passport to heaven, with which they are safe, and without which they are lost. This is a total mistake of its true nature. If their neglect proceed not from their own wilful fault and disobedience, they may go to heaven without it; while, if they receive it in a self-righteous spirit, they may perish with it.

Regeneration, faith in Christ, contrition, humility love, holiness, these things mark the heir of glory. Yet, there is, on the other hand, some danger, lest persons of evangelical sentiments, should undervalue this appointed means, and deprive themselves of that comfort, strength, and refreshment, which it is so well calculated to convey. Let the faith of the pious sick and dying be invigorated by these memorials of Christ; let their hope be enlivened, and their affections enkindled, by the appointed ordinance for commemorating his death. Many have found it a most blessed means of grace, in that solemn hour when all hopes fail, but those which spring from the cross of Christ.

CHAPTER XI.

The Happiness which would follow its universal and devout Observance.

The Lord's Supper being an ordinance which is eminently calculated to promote our holiness and happiness as Christians, a reasonable prospect of the universal observance of it, in a right spirit, is so delightful, that the author (whose heart is deeply interested in such a hope,) will for a little time dwell upon it.

The following considerations may tend to show that THIS HOPE IS NOT WHOLLY UNWARRANTED. The general prevalence of Christianity through the whole world, at a future time, cannot be questioned. The promise that *the knowledge of the Lord shall cover the earth, as the waters cover the sea*, is, among many others, clear and express. There is also in the Scriptures, a marked connexion between the sufferings of our Lord, and the extension of his kingdom. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto me.—His visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men; so shall he sprinkle many

nations.—When thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hands." Indeed, it is the doctrine of a crucified Saviour, fully proclaimed, and accompanied by the power of the Holy Ghost, that is the means of enlarging the kingdom of Christ, and building up his people in their most holy faith. We may well then suppose that an ordinance, commemorating a doctrine specially calculated to advance the conversion and edification of the world, will, when the Gospel is more generally and fully received, be much more constantly observed.

That day also will be marked by a general spirit of holiness. "There shall be upon the bells of the horses, Holiness unto the Lord; and the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yea, every pot in Jerusalem and in Judah, shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts: and all they that sacrifice shall come and take of them that see thee therein: and in that day there shall be no more the Canaanite in the house of the Lord of hosts." Zech. xiv. 20, 21. A state of holiness is a state of obedience and dedication to God. At such a time his precepts in general will be carefully observed, and men will be in a suitable state of mind to celebrate his solemn ordinances. The effect of bad example now, much counteracts the effect of a plain command; but the example of the good will then be so general, as to have a mighty influence.

We have scriptural authority to expect that the sufferings of Christ will then be remembered with peculiar affection and interest. After the affecting description given of those sufferings in the 22d Psalm, it is expressly promised—"all the ends of the earth shall remember and turn unto the Lord, and all the kindreds of the nations shall worship before thee." On this passage Diodati observes—"the true and lively knowledge of the sufferings and glory of Christ shall be given to, and preserved among all nations by the preaching of the Gospel; and especially by the

Sacrament of his body, therefore called a remembrance." Luke xxii. 19.

We may then reasonably hope that hereafter, as all the ordinances of religion will be much more scrupulously observed and constantly attended than now; so especially, when love to Christ is more extended and more fervent, the ordinance which was appointed by him under such peculiar circumstances as the Lord's Supper, will be carefully and generally regarded.

The author has been in some measure led to these remarks by the following interesting account of one of the first celebrations of this ordinance in New Zealand, an island hardly discovered, or scarcely known to Europeans, till the voyage of Captain Cook.

The Rev. Samuel Marsden, first chaplain to the Colony of New South Wales, in 1819, visited the missions established in this island. After mentioning that divine service was performed on one occasion, on the Sunday, in a shed, where the four great men in New Zealand (Shungee, King George, Pomarre, and Racow) attended; Mr. Marsden says—"all behaved with decorum, and we hope that the day is not far distant, when they will know the joyful sound of the Gospel, and have the Lord for their God, in the fullest sense. In the evening we had divine service; and afterwards the holy Sacrament was administered in this distant land; the solemnity of which did not fail to excite in our hearts, sensations and feelings corresponding with the peculiar situation in which we were. We looked back to the period when this holy ordinance was first instituted in Jerusalem, in the presence of our Lord's disciples; and adverted to the peculiar circumstances under which it was now administered, at the very ends of the earth; where a single ray of divine revelation had never till now dawned on the inhabitants."

Which of our Lord's disciples at its first institution would have imagined it should be observed through extended ages, and in the most remote parts of the earth? and why should *we* not now, who have seen

such large steps taken towards such a result as we are considering, hope for its universal observance.

Consider also THE EFFECT OF SUCH A UNIVERSAL REMEMBRANCE OF Christ. When the death of Christ is duly and generally remembered, and has, through the abundant gift of the Holy Ghost, its right influence on men, they will *no longer live to themselves, but to Him that died for them.* Divisions will cease, and Christians *all be one.* John xvii. 21. The whole race of man will be as ONE vast FAMILY, have one will, one heart, one aim, and one labour. It will be felt that there is *one Lord, one faith, one hope, one God and Father of all,* above all, through all, and in them all. Righteousness and truth, goodness and kindness, will universally prevail. Love to God, and love to each other will fill the earth as they now fill heaven; and in some happy degree these words will be fulfilled: "Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God."

It was once said of the three thousand, first converted to the Christian faith—"they continued steadfastly in the Apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayer." We may hope that this description will hereafter be true, not merely of one body of believers in one place, but of all the various and multiplied nations of the earth, in every land.

A late writer, in the following paraphrase on that petition in the Lord's prayer, *thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven,* has delightfully intimated the blessedness of such a conformity to the Divine will, as we may then expect. "In heaven thy will is the inviolable law. Myriads of ministers encircle thy throne, who cease not to celebrate and serve thee, with uninterrupted praises, and unerring obedience. O that such fidelity were found on earth! that the sons of men did even now resemble that celestial society, to which they hope hereafter to be united! were animated with the like holy ardent zeal, and could give themselves to God with the same entire devotion!

We are blind and vain, but thou art wise and good. Wise therefore in thy wisdom, secure under thy care, great and happy in humility and subjection, we have no wishes but in thee. Our whole desire and glory is to be, to do, to suffer, whatsoever thou art pleased to appoint."

Christian reader, does not true zeal for the glory of God, and enlarged benevolence for the best happiness of man, equally excite us to pray and labour for the advancement of such a state of blessedness? What a world would this be, if that peaceful, meek, kind, and tender spirit, in which we often come from the Lord's Table, were universally diffused? Men would be like angels, and earth like heaven. Yes; what a happy world would this be even now, if all men could, on good grounds, hope that they had received the Holy Spirit, were children of God, and going to his heavenly kingdom; and if the communion of saints were a general blessing. Thus "the Lord shall comfort Zion, he will comfort all her waste places; and he will make her wilderness like Eden, and her desert like the garden of the Lord; joy and gladness shall be found therein, thanksgiving and the voice of melody." Isa. li. 3. Supposing the Lord's Supper to be devoutly and universally observed, it would be as "the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the trees were for the healing of the nations."

Let us then remember that there is much within our own reach for aiding the coming on of this blessed time. Every step in the way of righteousness helps to advance and bring it on; every sin which we commit retards its progress, and does something towards hindering not only our own happiness, but the general happiness of the human race. Let us remember, that every additional communicant gained to attend the Lord's Supper in a right spirit, who before altogether neglected it, or attended it only formally, is another inroad on the kingdom of darkness, sin, and misery; and another approach towards the universal establish-

ment of that blessed empire, which *is not meat and drink, but righteousness, and peace, and joy, in the Holy Ghost.*

CHAPTER XII.

On Communion with Christ.

THE Communion of the body and blood of Christ, is a means of enjoying communion with him on earth, and also a pledge of that glorious communion which Christians hope for in heaven.

There is a communion, a holy and a delightful interchange of affectionate communication between Christ and his people. This agreement, fellowship, and friendship (and we have the authority of Scripture, for applying even such terms to so high and heavenly an intercourse,) are so near, entire, and intimate, that the same Scripture compares the union between Christ and his people to that of the husband and the wife. Ephes. v. 23—32. The vine and the branches. John xv. 1—8. The body and the members. 1 Cor. xii. 12—27.

It is a communion promised to all his obedient disciples—"He that hath my commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved by my Father; and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him." When Judas, on hearing these words, asked how the Lord would manifest himself to them, and not to the world; he replies:—"If a man love me, he will keep my words, and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him." Hence it is clear that there is a peculiar manifestation of Christ to his people.

The world, as our Lord intimates, knows not of this communion: it understands it not: it ridicules the idea. But still the real Christian is privileged to enjoy a sensible, perceptible, and enlivening inter-

course with his Lord. He has a secret and spiritual access to him, and comfort from him. Jesus Christ is his best friend, and his gracious support, refuge, and strength.

Jesus Christ speaks to him THROUGH THE HOLY SCRIPTURES. Often by them he is touched and affected with godly sorrow for sin, with ardent desires after holiness, and with a lively hope of future glory. Often in reading the sacred volume he hears the voice of Christ, and thus is led to communion with him. His Saviour more directly still imparts grace to his soul, by the gift and teaching of THE HOLY GHOST, whose office it is to take of the things of Christ and show them to us. Thus do we discover his grace and glory, long for his presence, and earnestly seek him. He to whom *all power in heaven and earth is given*, speaks again in HIS PROVIDENCE. If trials and sorrows are sent, consolations are generally at the same time so mingled with them, that in his best moments the Christian thanks God for them. If blessings are bestowed, they are received as given through a Saviour. In every providence, his voice, his hand, and his love may be marked. All are designed to lead us to nearer communion with him. All should be viewed as the manifestation of his care and wisdom, his compassion and tenderness. The Christian has ears to hear this voice, has eyes to see this hand, has a heart to feel this love. He knows Christ and is known of him.

Christians have an unreserved communion with Christ. Drawn by his Spirit they rejoice to go to him. They love his day, his house, his people, and every path of duty, where they find their Saviour. His grace descends on them, and their hearts are raised to him. *Truly*, says St. John, *our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.* There is no friendship on earth so entire, so unreserved, and so invaluable, as that which subsists between Christ and the faithful soul. It is a friendship which has ever subsisted between the believer and his God. *Enoch walked with God. Abraham was called the friend of God.* Jesus said to his disciples—*Ye are my friends,*

if ye do whatsoever I command you. Henceforth, I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard of my Father, I have made known unto you. How many are the benefits of having such a friend! He is a friend always near at hand, ever willing to hear us, who bears with our infirmities, who instructs us with the wisest counsel, gives us the most effectual aid, and never leaves us nor forsakes us. He is an unchanging and unchangeable friend. The Christian's privilege is to know this friend, consult him, ask for his guidance, converse with him, tell him all his sorrows, and all his sins, depend on him for support in all difficulties, for supplies in all wants, and cast all his cares upon him. Thus he has communion with Christ.

This communion is specially enjoyed at his table. A blessed intercourse with Christ as of one friend with another, and an exchange of the endearing pledges of mutual love, are what this sacrament is greatly calculated to promote. What Christian has not found, that as the eyes of the disciples at Emmaus were opened, our Lord making himself known to them *in the breaking of bread;* so sometimes now at his table, he manifests himself to his people and they too are ready to say to each other—"Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked with us by the way?"

Just after the first reception of the Lord's Supper, and with a direct reference to that institution, our Lord said, "I will drink no more of this fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the kingdom of God;" Mark xiv. 25; see also Matt. xxvi. 20. The term *new*, often signifies the excellence, truth, and superior nature of what was so named; and *wine*, is a common figure for joy and gladness. *The kingdom of God* may either refer to his spiritual kingdom in this world, or his kingdom of glory hereafter. Under this figure, then, of drinking new wine with his disciples, our Lord may intend to denote the passing away of the Jewish, and the superior excellence of the Christian Dispensation, the joy of his people,

through the power of the Holy Ghost, in their Saviour, and his joy in them, both in the church militant on earth, and in that triumphant above. And as the passage is connected with the Lord's Supper, it seems to include a blessed promise of a peculiar communion with his people in their due observance of that Institution. In this view of the Lord's Supper, we have here not only communion with our Christian brethren, but have the highest and most delightful communion with our Saviour in that spiritual kingdom, which he has established on earth, as well as the happy prospect of being ever with him in the heavenly kingdom.

The mode of expression—*Drinking new wine in the kingdom of God*, suggests many encouraging thoughts.

It shows us that Christ there PECULIARLY MANIFESTS HIS PRESENCE. Though invisible to the eye of sense, the eye of faith can behold him as the present and the real Head of his family; not only coming in like the king in the marriage supper to see the guests; but, though unseen, presiding over all who assemble around his table, and blessing them according to their wants. How refreshing the thought, that here Christ is, as it were, inviting every faithful disciple to partake of his blessings; saying—"Eat, O friends; drink, yea, drink abundantly, O beloved!" A supply for every want of our souls is thus offered and assured to us. The atonement through his blood, the remission of sins, the love of God, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and all the blessings of the new covenant, are afresh exhibited and assured to every believer by the appointed ministers of Christ, and under his special direction.

The expression, *drinking new wine*, suggests also, that FREEDOM with which we here have intercourse with our Lord. We feel a degree of liberty and freedom with those with whom we are permitted to eat and drink. The Christian has this blessed freedom of access to Him, who *is God over all, blessed for ever*; to one higher than the highest. Our Lord condescends to say—"If any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in, and will sup with him, and he

with me." Rev. iii. 20. The great Monarch that Christians obey, puts on no haughty and distant coldness and reserve; though infinite dignity and glory are shed around him, all is softened by infinite condescension, grace, and love. While Christians have the King of kings for their Lord and Saviour, they have a perfect freedom of access to this great King, even as to a bosom friend.

This communion is calculated to fill us with JOY. The most enlightened, devoted, and comprehensive mind, cannot conceive a higher joy on earth than that which he experiences, on whom the *Lord lifts up the light of his countenance.* The most exquisite earthly enjoyments, the tenderest sensibilities of our nature, joined to the highest delights of human friendship and love, are all poor and vain compared with those superior joys which Christ can and does bestow on his friends. What communion on earth can be like his who died for us, and who lives to make intercession for us? Whose excellencies of wisdom, equity, tenderness, power, and glory, can compare with Christ's? Are we privileged to have access to the *wonderful Counsellor, the mighty God,* the *Prince of Peace?* surely, the very prospect of it should excite the liveliest desire after it, the enjoyment of it should make the pleasures of the world for ever worthless and tasteless. Christian reader, lose not your happiness in the mere vanities of time and sense, but seek to rise to the full enjoyment of your amazing privileges.

This subject may well afford great consolation in all the troubles of this life. Whatever your difficulties may be, whether from the state of your affairs, from the perverseness of those around you, from the power of indwelling sin, or from many temptations; still, spiritual communion with your Saviour in his kingdom of grace, and the hope of full and perfect enjoyment of him in his kingdom of glory, may well both support and console you. Come then to Jesus in every period of sorrow. He is your Refuge and Strength. In communion with him every trouble will be greatly mitigated, or altogether removed. What tongue can

tell the happiness of him who lives with his Saviour as with an ever present companion and guide; who has communion with Jesus as an All-sufficient Friend; who became man for our salvation, and is still touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and sympathises with us!

But communion with Christ here on earth, however enjoyed, whether in daily prayer, in his house, through his providences, by his word, or at his table, is the sure PLEDGE of eternal abiding with him in the glory which is to come. Those who hear the voice of Christ, whom he knows and who follow him, are his people, and of them he says—"I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hands."

It is not only the pledge, it is also the FORETASTE of this bliss; the beginning of those eternal joys which shall never fail. When in a right spirit you surround the Lord's Table, you have a type and emblem, faint it is true, yet sufficiently significant, of the glorious feast above. Here indeed Christ is only invisibly present, but the spiritual joys here felt, are similar to those above; and the holy feelings here excited, are the beginnings of a more perfect holiness to be for ever possessed hereafter. Here indeed we see him by faith, there by sight: here all that encompass the table are imperfect, there all who surround the throne are perfectly holy. Here they are soon obliged to separate; there they go no more out, but live in the perpetual enjoyment of holiness, love, eternal glory, and the presence of Christ. But to have at this table any earnest of the future inheritance, and any anticipation of its songs of triumph, its holy joys and its blessed employments, may well endear the solemn ordinance to every faithful communicant.

Let us then now proceed to notice the HEAVENLY COMMUNION.

If communion with Christ on earth be so great a privilege, how much greater will be the blessedness of that WHICH WE SHALL ENJOY ABOVE! The highest figures are used to give us some view of the future

glory. It is called a kingdom, a father's kingdom; a crown, a crown of glory. It is Paradise, the Paradise of God; a marriage supper, the marriage supper of the Lamb. Let us then endeavour to contemplate the exceeding bliss of that day under the figure of drinking new wine in the kingdom of God. Thus St. John describes that scene of glory—"The marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready, and to her it was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white; for the fine linen is the righteousness of the saints. And he said unto me, Write, Blessed are they that are called unto the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God." Rev. xix. 7—9.

Conceive, then, the immortal soul prepared and made meet for that eternal inheritance; wholly free from all guilt and pollution, and admitted into the heavenly company; and then we shall be able to form some better idea of that supreme happiness which we can never fully conceive here below.

Let us first notice THE JOY OF OUR LORD IN THE HAPPINESS OF HIS PEOPLE. Is there a purer or higher joy than the perfect happiness of those whom we love, when we have contributed to it? Such is the joy of our Lord and Saviour. What words can declare his love to his redeemed? How he loved them with an everlasting love, loved them when enemies, died for them, strove with them; and, when perverse and obstinate, overcame them even by love itself! They are *the travail of his soul*, and their happiness is the reward of his sufferings. In the scene of ineffible glory of which we now speak, Christ beholds them completely blessed in him, and with him. His, and his Father's glory, are in a new way manifested to all created intelligencies by the bliss of ransomed sinners. For this joy *he endured the cross*. How will the joy of Christ, beloved as he is by the Christian, fill and enlarge every believer's heart with the highest gladness.

The Christian shall there BEHOLD THE GLORY OF CHRIST. We think the apostles and first disciples

favoured, who beheld his veiled glory. We wonder not at Zaccheus climbing a tree to get even a glimpse of the Son of God, when he dwelt on earth. Christian reader, realize by faith, for a moment, the delightful thought that your eyes shall behold your beloved Saviour in glory, and be able steadfastly to gaze on his matchless beauty, without being confounded by the effulgence of his brightness! Hard it is for us now to raise our souls to any view of him by faith; but then, without difficulty, wandering, or effort, we shall, with perfect ease and happy freedom, behold our gracious Redeemer *face to face, and see him as he is.*

We shall also HEAR THE WORDS OF CHRIST. What heart can imagine the bliss of that day, when Christ himself shall speak to you—"Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." Then we shall, not as now by painful studies, by the experience of many trials, by continual struggling and effort in prayer, attain some faint knowledge of God and his ways, for Christ himself shall converse with us, and we with him. Then will he show us the wisdom and love of our heavenly Father, in all that now seems dark and obscure, for he will fulfil that promise in its greatest and fullest meaning —"What I do thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." And not only will the goodness of our Heavenly Father be thus discovered to us in all past events, but we shall enter into a far deeper knowledge of his excellence than we can now conceive, and shall better understand the declaration—"This is life eternal, to know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent."

We shall also CONSTANTLY DWELL WITH CHRIST. Here the Christian has in some happy moments had a transient glimpse of his future bliss, and occasionally has been filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory. But how transient! How soon the eye of faith becomes dim! How soon the affections again sink and grovel on the earth! How soon the spiritual view of the glory and presence of Christ disappears! It will not be so there. That prayer will then be fully answered—*Father, I will that they also whom thou hast*

given me, be with me where I am; perpetually with me, never more to be separated—*that they may behold my glory.* Happy would the Christian be, did no sin now obscure the light, and damp the joy of communion with Christ. Happy would he be could he always live with Christ, and always be near and close to him. It will be so then. We shall never, through corruption, leave him; and he will never be provoked, by sin, to leave us.

Thus shall the Christian SHARE THE JOYS OF HIS SAVIOUR. That high and holy fellowship and friendship, which began on earth, and here afforded some bright beams of peace, and hope, and happiness, shall be perfected above. O what heart can now conceive the things which God has prepared for them that love him! We shall understand what we cannot now even imagine; we shall know in our happy enjoyment of them the full meaning of those words—"In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

Nor, having mentioned in a former chapter the communion of saints on earth as one of the benefits connected with a due reception of the Lord's Supper, must we altogether pass by that far more exalted, and that perfected COMMUNION OF SAINTS IN HEAVEN; when, without any alloy of sin in ourselves, or in them, we shall join the heavenly hosts in glory. The heart of the believer, in the lively exercises of faith, almost sickens with desire to enter the blissful society of *the spirits of just men made perfect;* to be like the holy angels, and ever with them; to join the glorious company of the apostles, the goodly fellowship of the prophets, the noble army of martyrs, and the whole church universal and triumphant. Who can tell the enraptured emotions of the redeemed soul, escaping from the snares of every enemy here, when we shall ascend to dwell with none but friends; none but holy and blessed spirits, full of love and of happiness! What will it be to associate with them, to partake their bliss, for ever to leave this lower scene of darkness, toil, and conflict, and there *to sit down with*

Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of heaven! O Christians, how eagerly should we look for, how *earnestly haste unto*, and how diligently prepare for the coming of that day!

CHAPTER XIII.

The due improvement of the Lord's Supper.

The design of this chapter is to furnish such hints as may assist the communicant to obtain practical advantage from his observance of this institution, in his subsequent course. The state of mind which is fostered at the Lord's Table, the feelings there excited, and the blessings there enjoyed, should be brought into practical application, and maintained by watchfulness and prayer. *Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought.* 2 John 8.

Some seem to think that if they have received the outward elements in a serious manner, abstained from their worldly business before and after, restrained their tongues from rough and unkind remarks, and behaved with sobriety for the day, that then they have done an acceptable service to God. But, Christian reader, let our aim be higher and better than this. Seek duly to improve the ordinance, so that it may be a fresh spring to a holy life.

In attending to the due improvement of the Lord's Supper, it may be expedient, first to review what is past, and then to notice the duties to which the faithful communicant is specially called. Such a work necessarily calls for retirement and reflection. Self-recollection, and communion with God in secret, should therefore succeed, as soon as we have opportunity, to our more public employments.*

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* It is recorded of the pious Bonnell, "When he returned from Church he immediately retired to his closet, and spent a considerable time in his own private prayers and praises.

Suppose then the Christian to have retired to his closet, one of his first duties will be, TO REVIEW THE STATE OF HIS MIND during the past solemnity.

In order to ascertain whether it has been such as we may have reason to hope will, on the whole, through the merits of the Redeemer, be *acceptable to God* (Rom. xiv. 18;) let us make a few practical inquiries, with reference to the exercise of those graces which we have before shown to be necessary to receiving the Lord's Supper with benefit; such as repentance, faith, gratitude, and charity (see chap. ix;) and with reference to those directions which have been before given for the employment of the mind during the communion service.—See Chap. x.

The chief thing is, have you duly remembered Christ at his table? You may know this by the holy tempers and dispositions which such a remembrance is calculated to produce and increase.

A due remembrance of Christ will increase PENITENCE and sorrow for sin. The contemplation in a right spirit of the only begotten of his Father, *wounded for our transgressions*, is evidently calculated to produce fresh convictions of the evil and guilt of all sin; and contrition and compunction for our many, our wilful, and our repeated transgressions. When with the eye of faith we look to him *whom* we have *pierced*, then it is we *mourn* for sin, and our hearts rise in holy indignation against ourselves. Have we, then, felt at the Lord's Table any thing like a deeper and more lively sense of our shameful ingratitude, our cold affections, and our base rebellions? Has this produced in us any feelings of godly sorrow, and truly humbled us before our Heavenly Father?

And as his wife was still his fellow communicant, so with her he prayed before dinner; blessing God for that happy opportunity given them both of commemorating our Saviour's sufferings and receiving the pledges of his reconciled favours, and praying for all those who had been partakers with them that day, or at any other time, of those blessed means of grace which they had then received."—See Hamilton's Life of Bonnell.

If Christ be duly remembered, GRATITUDE will be a prevailing sentiment in our hearts. You cannot consider aright your obligations to him without some emotions of love in your bosom. You will be ready to say, Surely I ought to love Christ. He made me, and died for me; he whom I have slighted and neglected, and who yet intercedes daily in my behalf, justly demands my warmest affections, and my whole heart. What friend have I so powerful, so wise, so tender, so forbearing, as Christ? See if there were ever sorrow like his sorrow, and what he underwent for me! Unsolicited, undesired, unwelcomed, he came and stood in the gap between me and eternal ruin. He disclosed the way to endless glory, and he now guides me by his Holy Spirit along the path of life; and can I remember this love aright without some kindlings of gratitude in my heart?

To this we may well join ADMIRATION, as another effect of a due remembrance of Christ. Who is so worthy of our admiration as he who is the source of all the excellence that is in others, and who combines in himself whatever is great, and whatever is good; whatever is worthy of love and of praise? At the Lord's Table you behold the most exalted of all beings giving his life a ransom for you, and tendering to you the blessings which you need. Though he be *the brightness of his Father's glory*, and the *express image of his person;* yet *he receiveth sinners, and eateth with them.* Can we then contemplate this astonishing mystery of redeeming love, without some sentiments of admiration? When the spirit is calm and the heart is pure, can we but admire the grace of Christ, and sing the song,—"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing?" The angels above *desire to look into these things*, and they sing his praise; can we then, when we remember what he has done, but be warmed with his love, and re-echo the angelic song,—"Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever?"

But perhaps you find, on inquiry, that instead of having devout and holy feelings, your FEELINGS have been COLD and DULL, and your mind has been wandering and distressed. Your examinations should tend to ascertain whether there be not a cause for this in yourself. It is true that Christians often find themselves more harassed by their corruptions at the seasons of devotion, than at other times. The exercises of prayer and communion with God, directly oppose the stream of sin, and its torrent being stemmed, swells more against us. Satan, too, perhaps, peculiarly tempts us at such a season, filling the mind with vain and trifling thoughts; and God permits it to be so, that we may be kept humble. We are ready enough to rest in our services, poor as they are: what would it be if they were wholly right? But while we make these allowances, it is still true, as it has been observed, that "unless in the case of bodily disease, or erroneous views of Divine truth, the want of comfort in religion springs from open or secret sin, from backsliding in heart, or in life. The joy of God's salvation is a holy joy, not to be found in the ways of sin, nor to be experienced in an evil heart of unbelief, departing from the living God."

Inquire then if any sin yet reign unmortified in your heart. Inquire how you approached to that holy table. On this point we refer you to what has been already said, chap. xi. p. 118—122. If you went thither carelessly, not preparing at all, or very slightly, or as a matter of self-righteousness, to make you worthy, as you vainly fancied, to appear before God; in any of these cases, no wonder that you meet with a rebuke, rather than a blessing; and, instead of light, found darkness. If you have received ignorantly or irreverently, uncharitably or with a carnal mind, the advice of Peter applies to you—"Repent, therefore, of this thy wickedness, and pray to God, if perhaps the thoughts of thine heart may be forgiven thee." Acts viii. 21—23. If you have gone thus carelessly and presumptuously, you have profaned a solemn ordinance, and you have sinned greatly before God. But

still be not cast down in despair, as if this were an unpardonable sin. Now, in your retirement, humble yourself before God, and you may here perhaps first be taught your natural corruption and helplessness; you may here first learn the lessons of brokenness of heart, and sorrow before God. Though we should deeply mourn and carefully watch and strive against every sinful act, yet the wonderful grace of God overrules sometimes even the very failings of his servants to their ultimate spiritual benefit.

Having thus pointed out the review which it is desirable to take of the state of our minds, and given such hints as may assist those who have not received with comfort or apparent profit, or have not duly received, we proceed to point out THE DUTIES TO WHICH THE FAITHFUL COMMUNICANT IS CALLED.

We have reason to hope that most of those who have duly prepared, will find on their return from this Sacrament, that even when they have had no remarkable elevation, they have still been enabled to go through the duty with seriousness and attention; something of a holy impression is left on their minds, some check is given to the love of sin, and some additional strength for holy duties.

And some can in more favoured periods say, "I enjoyed much of the presence of God, had communion with my Saviour and his people, and it was *a time of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.*"

In either of these cases those words are applicable to us, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me? I will take the cup of salvation,*

* In this term there is an allusion to a custom among the Jews of taking a cup, called the cup of deliverance, salvation, or blessing, at their solemn feasts, or when offering sacrifices for particular mercies; so that this is as if David had said, "I will call all my friends together to rejoice with me," and taking the cup which we call the cup of salvation, (because when blessed and set apart we are wont thus to commemorate the blessings which we have received,) "I will magnify the power, goodness, and faithfulness of

and call upon the name of the Lord; I will pay my vows unto the Lord now, in the presence of all his people." Ps. cxvi. Great have been his benefits to you. *Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth crucified among you.* You have seen that his blood was shed for the remission of sins, and you have been led to contemplate the risen Saviour in heaven as still carrying on the work of mercy; there pleading for you, thence bestowing his Holy Spirit, there preparing a home for you, and there waiting to receive you. Jesus Christ has as fresh tendered himself and all his salvation to you through his ministers, and you have received the emblems appointed, not only to exhibit his atonement, but to be given to each of his people personally, to assure them of their individual interest in his salvation. The inquiry under the sense of these benefits should be—*What shall I render unto the Lord?* Christian reader, see what beloved sin you can now for ever put away. Ask yourself—"How can I now set forth the glory of God, and most advance his kingdom? In what possible way can I best manifest my sense of his benefits?" What are the duties to which I am now specially called? We will state them in a few practical directions.

1. ABOUND MORE IN ACTS OF DEVOTION. Let us PRAISE our God more. There will ever be a remarkable contrast between God's blessings and our returns. He bestows innumerable blessings. We have nothing to give to him. After having done all, *we are unprofitable servants.* But he accepts a thankful spirit as a suitable return for his blessings. *Whoso offereth me praise he glorifieth me.* Let us then cultivate a lively sense of God's mercies, and a continual recollection and grateful acknowledgement of them. So shall we most resemble the blessed angels above, whose happiness it is, through all eternity, to praise and glorify God. And "as the beams of the divine goodness ever-

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God my Saviour, before all the company, and then give it to them, that they may together with me praise his name."—See Note, chap. x.

lastingly shine upon them, so there is an everlasting reflection of the same goodness in the incessant returns of praise and thanksgiving from them." Again, let us be more fervent and constant in PRAYER. If we have had, in the Lord's Supper, intimate communion with God, let us not lose the benefit by neglecting again to seek him. Not one of the duties which now lie before you, can you fulfil in your own strength. Not one of your enemies can you resist by your own power. You are wholly dependent on the Lord. Go then more constantly and simply to him. If we have obtained many blessings in answer to our supplications, let it encourage us to more frequent prayer. Though we may tell an earthly friend if he will give us our requests, we will trouble him no more; it need not be so with God. Nay, quite the reverse. David says, *Because he hath inclined his ear unto me, therefore will I call upon him as long as I live.* That repetition of request which would be offensive to man, is most grateful to Him in whom all fulness dwells, and who delights to give to them that ask. Let God's benefits, then, in the Lord's Supper, lead you to expect more from him, and to spend more time than ever you have before done in prayer to him. Let us also be more diligent in searching the SCRIPTURES. Here is *the lamp to our feet* and the *light* that will direct *our paths.* Here the blessings and the duties of that New Covenant, the ratification of which you have been commemorating, are fully displayed for your comfort and your guidance. Have to say then with David—"I made haste, and delayed not to keep thy commandments." Ps. cxix. 60.

2 REMEMBER YOUR GREATER OBLIGATIONS TO OBEDIENCE. Though we are bound to fulfil the will of God as his creatures, it is well to have added, as we have done at the Lord's Table, the new, distinct, and additional engagements of holy resolutions and vows, the self-binding authority of devout dedication of ourselves to God. It is calculated to impress more deeply on our minds the solemn duty of obedience to God's holy law. There is also a greater sin in disobedience,

after such a voluntary surrender of ourselves to God. "When thou shalt vow a vow unto the Lord thy God, thou shalt not be slack to pay it, for the Lord thy God will surely require it of thee, and it would be sin in thee." Deut. xxiii. 21. If a man keep not his solemn promise and engagement, we call him dishonest and fraudulent. If those that are married, break their vows of fidelity, we consider them as adulterers and adulteresses: what then are we to think of those who break vows of an infinitely stronger and more awful nature —who are unfaithful to God himself? Let us then endeavour to know and to feel with David, *Thy vows are upon me, O Lord*, Ps. lvi. 12. The Scriptural rule is, *when thou vowest a vow defer not to pay it.** Our

* I have frequently been asked by pious persons, and especially by some young converts, whether they might not be likely to be more faithful to God, if they considered themselves as making *vows*, similar to those recorded in the Old and New Testaments: and whether it was not lawful and expedient, by some peculiar, and solemn act of self-dedication, to devote themselves more intently to the service of the Redeemer and Saviour of their souls. Much may be said, and very much has been written on this subject. The following observations of Dr. Wardlaw, express in much better terms than I could employ, my own sentiments.

"Of such vows as were permitted and common under the Old Dispensation, we have no recorded and approved examples under the New: nor are any directions given us, for the making or performance of them. Resolutions in the strength of Divine grace, to serve the Lord, to cleave to him and to his word, and to his ways, we may, with propriety, form and express. Of this nature indeed is the language of God's people in their addresses to him, every day; and always has been and always must be.

"'I will go in the strength of the Lord God.'—But for the 'binding of the soul' by special obligations, such as imprecatory oaths, whether verbal or written; for bringing ourselves under a bond superadded to the sanction of the Divine command, I am not sure that we have any warrant, either from the conduct or the writings of the apostles of Christ. Paul's vows, recorded in the 18th and 21st chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, and others of a like nature,

first aim then should be, after receiving, to bring our good resolutions into practice, forsaking our past sins, and performing our omitted duties. As you are no longer your own, let this be your feeling—"I am now fixed, immoveably fixed for Christ and holiness, against sin and Satan. The matter is settled never to be called in question again—I will serve the Lord." Whatever others may do, have a settled conviction that you can no longer halt between two opinions. You must be *steadfast, unmoveable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord.* When a temptation presents itself, let us then put it off, saying, as Earle remarks, "Is such an action becoming what thou didst lately at the Lord's Table promise? Is such a conduct worthy of a christian, and becoming for a communicant? Does the indulgence of such a fleshly lust become a disciple of the holy Jesus, the immaculate Lamb of God? Is

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belonged to the Old Dispensation; which had then only 'waxed old, and was ready to vanish away,' and, although virtually abolished by the death of Christ, was not yet, in practice, finally set aside.

"Vows have been a snare to the conscience of many; especially of the weak, who have often been more afraid of transgressing because *God's eyes*, they say *are upon them*, than on account of the simple and immediate obligation of Divine authority. They are apt, too, as every thing must be, that is of our own devising, when they do not produce a spirit of bondage and fear, to engender the opposite one of self-righteous confidence and presumption. Vows of celibacy and pilgrimage; vows of money, houses, and lands, to pious uses; vows at baptism, and the Lord's Supper, at admission to church fellowship; and at ministerial ordination; and the oaths of personal and national covenanting, although some of them are more objectionable than others, appear alike destitute of New Testament warrant. When the word vow is used, as it frequently is synonymously, or nearly so, with the word *resolution*, it were idle to quarrel with a mere term. It is our duty, however, to beware of ensnaring our souls, by self-invented and self-imposed obligations, and of every such addition to his will, as might draw upon us the reproof, 'Who hath required this at your hands?'"—G. T. B.

pride, passion, malice, envy, and uncharitableness, suitable to the solemn profession of returning to him, who came to destroy the works of the Devil?" Let us remember also, that our obligations are not of a transitory nature, but for our whole lives. There are those who will be very strict for a little time after the sacrament, but soon return to their former sinful liberties. Such conduct seems to show that they have not yet been acting under the feeling of gratitude and love. We should not obey under the restraint of fear, the bondage of an unwilling mind, reluctantly brought to discharge the outward services; but freely and gladly giving God our whole hearts.

3. ENDEAVOUR TO RETAIN THE HOLY FEELINGS THAT HAVE BEEN EXCITED. You are returning to a chilling and distracting world. The devout and heavenly thoughts which filled your mind at the Lord's Table, may soon be dissipated and lost. It should be our aim and effort to gain the spirit of holiness as a blessed habit of our minds, so that we may not be holy only on a sacrament day, but holy at all times, and in all places. This is that *spiritual mind which is life and peace*, and till we gain this, we shall never truly know the blessedness of real religion. You have perhaps had in this solemn service, or in connexion with it, lively desires excited in your heart after the Saviour's presence and glory; you have been led to aspire after and long for those superior joys which are *at his right hand for ever more;* and have been ready to say, *Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.* O then, after the enjoyment of such feelings and desires, let us no longer *cleave* so *to the dust*, and make this world our resting place, and our portion, as we have heretofore done, but rather *set our affections on things above.* You have, perhaps, felt a strength of attachment to Christ, which you have never before experienced. Be it your aim to keep this feeling strong in your hearts, that your love may never wax cold.

4. CONTEND MORE VIGOROUSLY WITH YOUR SPIRITUAL ENEMIES. Every time we receive the Lord's Supper, we renew afresh our baptismal vow, and renounce

afresh our three great enemies, the Devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lust of the flesh. O do not merely profess to serve God; do not serve him with your lips only, while your heart is in league with his enemies. Be not so inconsistent as to act in direct contradiction to those solemn professions which you have been making in the presence of God and his people, by again yielding to the temptations of Satan, and walking after the course of this world, and following the devices of your own evil heart. Surely it is a suitable thought after this service, "I have disclaimed the world as my portion, shall I then, for the compassing of a little of its forbidden gain, wrong my brother to whom I ought to do good? wrong my profession, which I ought to adorn? and wrong my conscience, which I ought to keep void of offence?" In the words of St. Paul, "Ye cannot drink of the cup of the Lord, and the cup of Devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's Table, and of the table of Devils. What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord." Avoid then all unnecessary associations with worldly and wicked people. Do not make them the companions of your choice. Rather say with David, "Depart from me, ye evil doers, for I will keep the commandments of my God." Come out from the sinful practices, the vain amusements, and the trifling pursuits of the world. You belong to a better society; you have higher and holier companions.*

* On the important subject of communicants entering into the gayeties and amusements of the world, I had intended to have offered a few remarks in the form of a Note in this place, where the matter is but slightly touched upon by the author of the Treatise. My remarks, however, were found too extended to be put into a Note, and I have been obliged to throw them into the form of an Essay, and publish them as an Appendix. The reader is therefore referred to the close of this volume.—G. T. B.

We have noticed that Christians may be specially harassed by their corruptions, at seasons of devotion; and it has been sometimes found that after receiving, they have been much tempted by their great adversary. They have been tempted, perhaps, to think highly of themselves as spiritual and holy characters. Guard against thus falling into pride, the peculiar temptation of the Devil. *Eating and drinking in the presence of Christ*, (Luke xiii. 26,) are by no means decided proofs of eminent piety. At other times we are tempted after the enjoyment of a spiritual privilege, to become careless, unwatchful, and off our guard. It is recorded for our admonition, that Peter denied, and all the disciples forsook their master after the Lord's Supper. Let us then *watch and pray*. Let us go from the Lord's Supper, not to indulge sloth and negligence, but to a holy walk with God, and a determined conflict with all our spiritual enemies, boldly confessing our Saviour before men, and *speaking good of his name*.

5. ENDEAVOUR TO ATTAIN MORE OF THE MIND OF CHRIST. Imitate the Saviour whose death you have been commemorating. O that there were such a love to Christ, and delight in him, and admiration of him, that we copied his graces, and were never contented till we were like him. Let the same spirit animate you which animated him, the spirit of gentleness, meekness, patience, and love; the spirit of faith, devotion, self-denial, and zeal. The disciples should be like their master. *He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself so to walk, as he also walketh.* The Apostles, from their having been with our Lord, attained something of his holy courage and firmness; and their enemies even *took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus.* O that there were such an evident elevation of piety in every communicant, such meekness, heavenly-mindedness, and self denial, that all around could see the blessed effects of communion with Christ at his table!

6. CULTIVATE A SPIRIT OF SINCERE LOVE, love to the brethren, and to all men. This duty is here taught

with much advantage. Having seen in this ordinance that Christians are all members of the same body, consider what love there should be among them. Let us frequent, and delight in, the society of the pious. David says, "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts." Surely we ought to have a tender sympathy in each other's sorrows, and each other's joys. Let this holy feast teach us disinterested, fervent, pure, self-denying, undissimulating love to the brethren; to be like minded one towards another according to Christ Jesus; to put away as much as possible all coldness, distance, suspicions, and jealousies; and to be open, kind, and tender-hearted, *forgiving one another even as God for Christ's sake has forgiven you.* It has been well said, "let those that have had communion with God in this ordinance be able to appeal to their relations and domestics, and all they converse with, and to vouch them for witnesses, that they have mastered their passions, and are grown more mild and quiet in their families than formerly they were. Let us never give occasion to the enemies of religion to say that the seriousness of religion makes men sour and morose, and that zeal in devotion disposes them to peevishness and passion;"* let us rather show that the more earnest we are in religion, the more we are cheerful and amiable, and loving towards all with whom we have to deal.

This love will be shown in gladly availing ourselves of opportunities to do good, and seeking for such opportunities. It will also manifest itself in attention to the wants of the poor. If we ourselves have richly partaken of the feast which God's mercy has provided for us, *let us send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared.* Neh. viii. 10. Let us be thoughtful of the spiritual and temporal wants of the afflicted poor around us.

7. ADORN THE RELIGION OF YOUR SAVIOUR. Let our spirit and temper, our words, and our whole conduct and behaviour, be such as *becometh the Gospel of*

* See Henry's Communicant's Companion.

Christ. How devout, how holy, and how spiritual was the conversation of our Lord, (as we have it recorded from the 14th to the 17th chapters of St. John's Gospel,) after first administering and partaking of this ordinance! O that our conversation, too, like his, may ever after be full of love, and kindness, and devotion! Again, a faithful discharge of relative duties truly adorns religion. "The master ruling with gentleness; the servant labouring with cheerfulness and fidelity; the husband kind and tender; the wife meek and obedient; the father mixing parental affection with correction; the son manifesting filial love, with dutiful submission; and so in every other relation, each fulfilling the duties of their station. This will make our houses temples; and the charity, forbearance, patience, and submission shown one to another in such families, will be the most convincing proof that Christ really dwells under that roof." God has brought you near to him, "that you may be unto him for a people, and for a name, and for a praise, and for a glory." The profession of religion made at the Lord's Table seems to impress this duty of honouring his name with peculiar force. You have been publicly confessing Christ before men, and acknowledging your hope in him before his people. You have also received from him the tokens of his favour. The honour of Christ is then in some measure entrusted to you. The world, perversely enough, and sometimes, alas! to their eternal ruin, judge of Christ and his Gospel by the conduct of his professing people. Your failings may be a stumbling block; your steadfastness in faith, hope, and love, a blessing to many. Christian communicant! your tempers and dispositions should set forth the excellence of Christ to a world in ignorance of him. When the more glorious light of the sun has left us, the mild and peaceful beams of the moon enlighten a land otherwise enveloped in darkness; and give us some faint, yet cheering resemblance of the beauty and benefit of the greater light of heaven. Christian communicant, let your light borrowed from the Saviour, reflect some peaceful and

beneficial rays in the midst of a dark world. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

We conclude the whole of this part of the Treatise, by pressing on the reader's attention the importance of observing this ordinance, and repeating the dying charge of the Redeemer,

THIS DO,
IN REMEMBRANCE OF ME.

A TREATISE

ON

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

PART II.

DESIGNED TO ASSIST THE COMMUNICANT IN DEVOUTLY RECEIVING IT.

PART II.

CHAPTER I.

Helps for Self-examination

In the former part of this Treatise, the subject of self-examination, as a part of preparation needful before the first reception of the Lord's Supper, has been already considered. But as self-examination is a duty of continual recurrence, we will endeavour to give some farther help to the constant performance of it, and show how far it may be profitably varied.

Well would it be for Christians, if they were in the habit of close daily self-examination. It is not indeed easy, or perhaps practicable, for those engaged in all the bustle of business in large cities, to give much time to this work; but what Christian could not pause for a few moments before his evening prayer, look back on the past day, trace what has been the course of his thoughts, words, and actions; and so be better prepared for all the parts of prayer.*

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* The following questions have been recommended for this purpose.

Questions for the Evening.

1. What mercies have I received this day; answers of prayer; deliverance from evil; common or remarkable blessings?
2. What sin have I committed? What duty omitted?
3. What have I done, endeavoured, or designed for the glory of God, or the good of my neighbours; or what opportunities have I neglected of promoting them?

But before the reception of the Lord's Supper, the duty cannot in ordinary cases be neglected without the breach of a divine precept, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." A watch requires not only to be wound up daily, but at occasional intervals a particular looking into, to be cleaned and oiled afresh.

These general directions may with advantage be first attended to.

1. LET A FIXED TIME BE SET APART, before you receive the communion, FOR THIS DUTY. It is a duty that cannot be discharged incidentally, or in a moment, nor without some self-denial and resolution.—

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4. With what success have I encountered those sins to which my circumstances or constitution most incline me; passion, sloth, impurity, intemperance, vanity, &c.
5. Have I been looking to Jesus as my righteousness, my strength, and my example?
6. How have I improved my time this day? Have I made any progress in religion? Have I thought of death and judgment? Have I walked with God?
7. Have I prayed, and how? Have I read the Scriptures, and how?
8. What mercy do I want for soul or body, myself or my relations, that I may now ask it?
9. Have I remembered my promises made at the last sacrament, and how have I performed them?

Questions for the Morning.

1. Did I read and pray, meditate, and examine myself last night; and in what manner?
2. Did I think of God the last thing on lying down, and the first thing on rising up?
3. What sin have I committed in thought, word, or deed, and what duty has been omitted since the last evening?
4. What occasions may I probably have this day of serving God, and benefitting my neighbour?
5. To what temptations am I likely to be exposed?
6. What mercies have I received, and what blessings do I now need?
7. Is it my desire to live this day by the faith of the Son of God? Gal. ii. 20.

Something has already been said on this subject;* but, with reference to that examination, which is always desirable when we from time to time receive the Lord's Supper, some further remarks may be made.

Dr. Owen gives the following sensible directions on this point: "Take care that the time to be spent in preparation, neither encroaches on the occasions of the outward man, nor on the weakness of the inward man. If it does, they will be too hard for us. There is a double direction in Scripture; one is, *God will have mercy and not sacrifice.* When the observance of sacrifices sensibly encroaches on duties of mercies, God does not require it. The other is, *bodily exercise profiteth little.* When we assign so long a time as wearies our spirits, and observe the time, because of the time, it is bodily exercise; and when the vigour of our spirits is gone, it is not a sacrifice in which God delights.—Prudence is here required."

Yet on the other hand he remarks, "Let not the time allotted be so short, as to be unmeet for going through the duty effectually. Men may be ready to turn their private prayer into a few ejaculations, and going in or out of a room, may serve them for preparation for the most solemn ordinance. This has lost us the power, the glory, and the beauty of our profession, which are greatest and brightest when Christians are most exact in preparation for their duties. After particular sins and mercies, or before particular duties, we should also add a more solemn preparation."

It is impossible to give any rule as to the length of time that should be given. The obligation of persons varies with their situations and circumstances; but we apprehend even those most limited for time, might, by due efforts, even if the time were redeemed from sleep, (in which they would only copy the highest example, Luke vi. 12,) give at least an hour to this duty on some day previous to that on which they receive the Lord's Supper. Those of more leisure might

* See Chap. ix.

give several hours. Give such time as, consistently with your other duties, you can spare; but let the time in every case be so employed, not as a task but as a blessing; not merely as a requirement, but as a privilege and advantage. Indeed you may be assured, as the result of the experience of many, that the more close, and faithful, and diligent you are in self-examination, the more comfort and benefit you are likely in the result to receive.

But it may be asked, is a man never to receive the Lord's Supper, without a minute and particular self-examination. We may distinguish between the younger Christian, in his first approach to this holy table, and the more advanced Christian, steadily persevering in the ways of God. In our early reception of the Lord's Supper, great care and attention in preparation is of peculiar importance and benefit. But an advanced Christian, who has known and loved the truth for many years, and gradually been growing in grace, has to a certain degree an habitual preparation. Should he unexpectedly find the Lord's Supper to be administered, we doubt not he would receive it with much advantage, without any other than his habitual preparation of mind. Yet even to him we are persuaded it would be profitable to inquire into the course of his conduct, since he last received; and to him the season of retirement and self-reflection, to which this ordinance calls us, is a matter of great and incalculable benefit.

Yet beware of formality and self-righteousness. The author cannot but fear that the general use of "the Week's Preparations," however well intended by those who published them, or those who read them, tends to build up a person in a fancied worthiness and righteousness of his own, which is supposed to fit him to receive those spiritual blessings which the Gospel shows are freely given to the unworthy; or else tends to sink him into a mere formal act without spirit, life, or benefit.

A second general direction that may be useful is this, CONSIDER THE HOLY SCRIPTURES AS THE GREAT

TEST BY WHICH YOU ARE TO TRY YOURSELF. They are the only true standard of self-examination; the touch-stone which discovers at once the character of the metal. But as the sacred volume is far too large to be gone through at any particular time, we would recommend the following plan which has been found useful. When you endeavour to ascertain if you repent of sin, read the 51st Psalm, and compare the state of your own views and feelings with those of penitent David. When you examine whether you have a lively faith, read the 11th of Hebrews, and notice there the effects of true faith, and inquire how your faith influences you. When you try your state of mind as to a sense of God's mercy, read the 103d Psalm, and compare your affections with those of the grateful Psalmist. When you would ascertain the state of your soul as to its desires towards God, read with this view, Psalm 63 or 84. When you wish to learn your true character as to charity, read the 13th of the 1st of Corinthians, and thus discover your real state. The ten commandments, the 15th, 24th, 26th, 119th, and other Psalms, the Beatitudes, (Matt. v.) and the whole sermon on the mount, the 1st Epistle of St. John, and many other parts of the Scriptures, might be mentioned as peculiarly adapted to this purpose. By thus comparing your state with the most practical and spiritual parts of the word, and varying those parts from time to time, you try yourself by a perfect and infallible standard. Several specimens of questions for self-examination on this plan, are given in this chapter.

It has also been found advantageous, when reading practical books, such as Doddridge's Rise and Progress, Beveridge's Private Thoughts, Leighton's Works, Alleine's Alarm, Walker's Christian, Hall's Christian laid Forth, and similar practical treatises, to make use of them as a means of self-examination, noting down what strikes your mind as displaying your true character before God. The sermons which you hear every Sunday, furnish you with another test by which to try yourself. A point of inquiry that

may often advantageously occupy our attention, is our fidelity in our peculiar circumstances, and in the discharge of relative duties. What does my situation require? What are my difficulties, temptations, and dangers? How do I fulfil my duty as parent or child, husband or wife, master or servant, minister or hearer, brother or sister, poor or rich, in public or in private? Here is a large and very important subject for profitable self-examination.

One more general direction may be added—CONDUCT THIS EXAMINATION IN THE SPIRIT OF PRAYER. If this be neglected, self-examination may only prove a mean of delusion and danger to your immortal soul. We are all prone to think well of and to justify ourselves.—*The heart is deceitful above all things*, and Satan is ingenious to suggest to our minds many excuses for our misconduct. We are prone also to think little of the evil of sin, and to refer to the false standard of what others are doing, rather than what the Bible requires. Sometimes also we are tempted to write hard and bitter things against ourselves. Self-examination under such influences may only tend to deceive us; to harden us; or to sink us into despair. It may thus fix us in our errors with increased strength. Fervent prayer is the true remedy for this. God who searches the heart, discovers its true character to those who pray to him, to show them to themselves. Observe how David prays—"Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; search me, and know my thoughts; look well if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting." Ps. xxvi. 2; cxxxix. 23, 24.

The advantages of occasionally reducing to writing the results of this self-examination, are, that it more impresses your own mind at the time, and it may be easily referred to afterwards. Why should not the Christian find as much advantage in making from time to time an accurate estimate of the state of his heart, as a merchant does in keeping accounts of his gains and losses, and making an accurate estimate of the true state of his affairs. Having given these

general directions, we will proceed to give more particular hints for helping in this important duty.

Let us always begin it with prayer.

A short Prayer before Self-Examination.

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, who searchest the heart and triest the innermost thoughts, I beseech thee now to assist me in looking into my own heart, and my own life. Feeling and acknowledging that my heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, I beseech thee to show me to myself. Enable me to try myself by the standard of thy holy word, and discover the true state of my soul; give me repentance, for all my past sins, lively faith in Jesus Christ the only Saviour from sin, deep humility before thee, and such tempers and dispositions as are meet for those who assemble round the table of our gracious Redeemer. These things I ask for his name's sake.

CHAPTER III.

Hints for the Regulation and Employment of the Mind during the Communion Service.

The Communion Service of the Protestant Episcopal Church, with remarks upon it, will be given in Chap. iv; the object in this chapter is to assist the Communicant in regulating the general state of his mind, and improving the leisure moments which he will have, while others are receiving the sacred elements.

A devout attendance on the previous services, public worship, singing the praises of God, and hearing his Gospel, are peculiarly calculated to prepare us for the more solemn act of devotion which succeeds.

An interval of time, while those who do not intend to partake of the Lord's Supper are leaving the church,

will allow you a favourable opportunity for collecting your thoughts, and offering up a short prayer to God for his presence, help, and blessing.

During the succeeding service, endeavour to maintain a COMPOSED AND TRANQUIL SPIRIT. Some are so agitated by the importance of the service as to lose calmness and self-possession; but let us remember, that we are going to a Father's Table; and let us endeavour to go with freedom and cheerfulness, as well as with seriousness and devotion.

REALIZE, as much as practicable, THE DIVINE PRESENCE. It is a solemn service in which you are engaged. God is peculiarly present. You are about as it were, *entering into the holy of holies by the blood of Jesus*. Heb. x. 19. Receiving unworthily is both sinful and dangerous. With David, then, pray—"Examine me, O Lord, and prove me; try my reins and my heart. See if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

The following hints in the way of actual direction may assist in showing you how the time may be most profitably employed while others are communicating, and before or after you yourself have communicated. But it is allowed that there is some danger, lest we should overload the mind of the Communicant, and distract rather than help him. Be not then anxious minutely to attend to the whole of them, each time that you communicate. Some may serve to help you at one time, and some at another. You will find it probably more useful, rather to dwell on one or two points, than to be too particular in attempting to attend to them all at one time.

HUMBLE YOURSELF BEFORE GOD. The nearer access we have to God, the more humble we should be. When Isaiah saw the glory of the Lord, and heard the song of the Seraphim—"Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory;" his own sinfulness rushed upon his mind, and his first expressions were—"Wo is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips." When the Centurion came to beseech Jesus in behalf of his afflicted

servant, and Jesus promised to come and heal him, see how he humbles himself in the promise of such a visiter—"Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed." These are expressions suitable for us at this table. True humiliation makes us welcome the atonement of Christ.

LET THERE BE ACTS OF FAITH IN CHRIST CRUCIFIED; such a faith as *worketh by love*. You are under that New Dispensation where there is remission of sins, and may therefore "have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the vail, that is to say, his flesh." Heb. x. 19, 20. Now you should be looking to the crucified Redeemer, with a gracious confidence, as the poor malefactor did, when that Redeemer hung on the cross, and saying to him,—"Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." Luke xxiii. 42. Look to him as those women did who followed him from Galilee, went after him weeping to the place of crucifixion, and came and stood by the cross full of fidelity, tenderness, and love. Matt. xxii. 25. Or again, as that disciple did *whom Jesus loved*, who waiting on him in his last moments, and received his dying charge, and immediately and steadfastly fulfilled it. John xix. 25.

MAKE KNOWN YOUR REQUESTS UNTO GOD. It is a favourable time for prayer. Pray, 1. FOR YOURSELF. Sinners are now reconciled to God by the death of his Son. Consider, then, what it is you most need; and be particular in unbosoming yourself to your God, even as a child would to a kind and loving father. Pray that the service in which you are now engaged may be a means of grace to your own soul, so that you may receive all the blessings designed by this institution, and especially an increase of faith in Christ; a more simple and entire dependence on his death, as "an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour." Pray also, 2. FOR OTHERS; that they may *obtain like precious faith with you in the righteousness of God, even our Saviour Jesus Christ.* 2 Pet. i. 1.

Enlarge your petition as the time will allow. Pray for your partners in life; if worldly and unconverted, wrestle with God for their conversion; if pious, pray that they may abound always in every good word and work. Parents, bring your dear children, as it were, one by one, and by name, before the Lord, and ask for each child a suitable blessing. Masters, pray for your servants. Pass on to the devout recollection of all your relatives and friends, and think especially of the peculiar circumstances of any of them, which may require peculiar aid from God. Pray for your minister, that while he dispenses to others, he may also richly partake of the bread of life, to the nourishment of his own soul; and for your fellow communicants, that as each partakes of the outward symbol, he may inwardly feed on Christ by faith. Pray, too, for all Christians throughout the world. Intercede for all those who have wronged or injured you, striving to enter into the full meaning of our Lord's command, *Love your enemies*. Pray for Jews, Turks, infidels, and heretics; the death commemorated in the Sacrament, is that of a *Lamb* to take away *the sins of the world*. Let then, a communion day be specially a day of intercession for all men, that God would *pour out his Spirit on all flesh*.

Praise God for his manifold mercies. Surely the immense benefit which we are here commemorating should lead us to say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities, who healeth all thy diseases, who redeemeth thy life from destruction, who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies, who satisfieth thy mouth with good things, so that thy youth is renewed like the eagles." Never can we view redeeming love aright, without a thankful and grateful heart. If Jesus has done so much for us, surely we may well offer up the rapturous song of praise, "Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his blood, and hath made us to be kings and priests unto God and his Father, to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

GIVE YOURSELF UP TO THE SERVICE OF GOD. All we are and all we have, are from him: and when such mercies are presented before us as the Lord's Table exhibits, each should be constrained to *present himself* (freely and voluntarily offering ourselves,) to be a *living sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God*. Jesus has redeemed us from the death of sin, and eternal ruin; let us, then, "yield ourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and our members as instruments of righteousness unto God." The Lord's Supper is one of the appointed ways in which God calls us, from time to time, to give up ourselves afresh to him. It is an ordinance in which "one shall say, I am the Lord's; and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob; and another shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and surname himself by the name of Israel." Isa. xliv. 5.

MAKE HOLY RESOLUTIONS IN THE STRENGTH OF DIVINE GRACE. Now is the time to determine more firmly to strive against all sin, and more resolutely to fulfil all your duties. Deliberately, in the presence of God, and his saints, now in your secret devotions, express your steadfast purpose to *have no fellowship with the unfruitful workers of darkness, but rather to reprove them;* and that, however assailed and tempted, you will, in the strength of Christ, and quickened by his death, be faithful unto him. Now is the time to decide upon and bind yourself to more enlarged charity. When Zaccheus was honoured with the presence of our Lord under his own roof, he said, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give unto the poor, and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold." It was on this determination that he was gladdened by that cheering assurance—"This day is salvation come to this house, forasmuch as he is also a Son of Abraham." And when Christ dwells in our hearts by faith, we should be forming purposes and plans how we may most effectually lay ourselves out to him.

This is also a proper time for MEDITATION upon divine subjects. We shall endeavour, in a subsequent

chapter, to furnish some help in the discharge of this duty. Let us have ready some affecting passages of God's word relating to the love of God in Christ, and the Saviour's sufferings and death, and think on them till the Holy Spirit touch and inflame our heart with some kindlings of love to God, and some breathings after him.

CHAPTER IV.

On the Communion Service of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

[The Communion Service of our church in this country differs in its arrangements from the service of the Church of England. These differences, however, are very immaterial, and do not in the least respect the doctrine contained in either. Small as they are, however, they have compelled me to relinquish the idea of merely putting notes where any explanation seemed to be required; and I have rather chosen, as the most practicable method, not to adhere to the arrangement of the author. The American reader would of course prefer to have remarks on the Communion Service of his own church, rather than on that of the Church of England, even though there should not be any considerable variation between the two. Several of the *Rubrics* attached to the Communion Service of the latter, are merely matters of local arrangement, arising from the peculiar circumstances of a church establishment; and in the body of our service some alterations have been made by the General Convention of 1789, by the transposition of some parts. In this chapter, as it stands in the original work, the greater part of the service is also published. I have thought best merely to refer to this, as the publication of the whole Communion Office would have increased the bulk, and consequently the expense of the work—have precluded the possibility of some important ob-

servations, and on the whole been unnecessary, as it is very easy for the reader to take the Prayer Book in his hand, and refer to the passages as he goes along. On these grounds I have thought best to pursue the present plan; the author's remarks will for the most part be retained, and all that is added, will be placed within brackets, thus, [ ] with the exception of a few notes, which cannot properly be put into the text.—G. T. B.]

The nature of the Lord's Supper, and the whole of its design, are practically and devotionally brought before us in our Communion Service. We are here, also, furnished with a test of those dispositions which are needful for a due reception of this ordinance. It has been well remarked, "Read over attentively the service of our church, and if you can join heartily and sincerely, with the spirit and with the understanding, in the prayers, the confession, and the thanksgiving that are there, you are indeed meet to be a partaker of those holy mysteries."

It is hoped that the following observations on the Communion Service, may assist the devotions of the Communicant.* We have an excellent *form of sound words*, which we shall do well to *hold fast*; (2 Tim. i. 13.) but, we should ever remember, that there must be something besides the form of words, however admirable they may be, to communicate the life and feeling of devotion; even the life-giving Spirit of Jehovah. We may repeat the words with our lips, without any desire or feeling of the heart. God may have

* Several of these observations are taken from the Rev. J. Milner's Sermon on the Communion. The author has not entered into any critical remarks on the service. Those who wish to see it defended from objections may consult Wheatley, Nichols, and others on the Common Prayer, and Hooker's Eccl. Polity, Book v. sect. 68. The author's object has been to give a few practical and devotional remarks on the service.

Bishop Brownell's late Commentary may also be mentioned as a valuable family book.

to say of us, as he did of Israel, "They have well said all that they have spoken. O that there were such an heart in them!"

The whole of this service may be considered as a public record of the most solemn and important transactions that can take place on earth, between the fallen spirit of man, accepting salvation by Jesus Christ, and *the God of the spirits of all flesh*, giving the pledge of that salvation by his Ministers.

The service begins with the Lord's Prayer; well may we commence this solemn transaction with addressing God as a Father, and with petitions for the advancement of his glory, the gift of our daily bread, and the forgiveness of our own sins with a profession to forgive all others sinning against us. These petitions will all bear an edifying reference to the important duty in which we are about to engage.

The affecting prayer that God would "cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of his Holy Spirit," is adapted to our fallen and impure state, unable of ourselves to think any thing aright, and yet hoping for the promised aid of the Holy Spirit. To pray that we may perfectly love God, is a suitable introduction to the ten commandments, which are next brought before us, Love being the fulfilling of the law.

The compilers of our Liturgy knowing that *by the law is the knowledge of sin*, and that a penitent heart is most needful for a due reception of the Lord's Supper, have well placed at the commencement of this service, THE TEN COMMANDMENTS, containing a comprehensive summary of the holy law of God. We must not suppose that these precepts relate only to the outward act of sin; our Lord has shown us that they forbid that principle, or love of sin, which leads to outward iniquity. When, for instance, it is said, *Thou shalt have none other gods but me*, it forbids our forgetfulness of God, and our love of the world; *if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.* When it is said, *Thou shalt do no murder;* angry thoughts, and malice, and revenge are forbidden, as well as murder. When we are told, *Thou shalt not com-*

mit adultery; impure thoughts are equally forbidden. This manifestly is the obedience which the Lord of all requires. Matt. v. 21, 22, 27, 28. Hence you observe, that after every command the congregation are directed to say, "Lord have mercy on us," hereby, as it is said in the rubric, "asking God mercy for their transgressions thereof for the time past." You should inquire, therefore, whether, when you have repeated these words after each command, you really felt that you had in the sight of God broken that command, and needed his pardoning mercy. We are farther taught to add, "and incline our hearts to keep this law." This plainly expresses, if we repeat it in sincerity, that we are convinced that we have neither natural inclination, nor power of ourselves, to obey God's holy commands; but look up to him, and depend wholly on him, to dispose and enable us to do his will; and really purpose and desire to obey his holy law.

[After the commandments, there suitably follows, our Lord's summary of the Divine Law, with the very admirable collect which immediately follows it. These are not in the English service, but were added on the revision of the Prayer Book, by the General Convention of 1789. The reason of this addition is thus given by the venerable Bishop White, who took a very conspicuous part in the affairs of the church then—a part which Providence has enabled him still to exercise. The object was to "give to the weight of Moses, the greater authority of our Saviour."]

The COLLECTS for each Sunday are generally adapted to prepare our minds for the portion of Scripture selected from the Epistles and Gospels. Our church, after the declaration of the law in the ten commandments, brings before us some suitable and affecting portion of the Gospel of that Saviour, by whom we are *redeemed from the curse of the law.*

The Apostles', or else the NICENE CREED follows. [The Apostles' creed is so called, not that any one may suppose it written by the Apostles, but simply because it contains the doctrines they preached, and was proba-

bly drawn up about the time they lived.] The Nicene creed is so called because it was for the most part framed at the great council held at Nice, in 325. It is right and suitable after reading the word of God, and before we communicate together, that we should mutually acknowledge the same faith. [These are not ordinarily read on communion days, as one of them must have been read before in the morning service, and they are here omitted to prevent unnecessary repetition.]

The part of this service that we have hitherto considered, is directed to be read every Sunday, as it were to invite Christians to more frequent communion. And observe how far we have now been led. The holy law of God having been set before us, we have been taught to acknowledge ourselves guilty and helpless. The Gospel of Christ being then read, we have been called on to express our faith in God as our Father, Jesus as our Saviour, and the Holy Ghost as our Sanctifier. Retrace, then, your thoughts. Have you been sincere when you have repeated this service? Have you felt, as well as acknowledged, your sinfulness and your weakness? Has the Gospel really been good tidings to you? Was the profession of faith repeated in the creed more than a mere expression of the lips? Was it the unfeigned confidence and conviction of an upright and true heart? If you have proceeded thus far in sincerity, you are a penitent believer; you are in a fit state of mind to receive the Lord's Supper.

We now come to that part of the Liturgy which is more directly connected with the administration of this Institution.

The Sunday before that on which it is designed to celebrate this ordinance, a suitable EXHORTATION is appointed to be read. Two are given in the Prayer Book. One contains directions to prevent our receiving it in a careless or presumptuous spirit: and the other urges those to come who are in the habit of neglecting. You would find it useful to read these to assist you in your preparation.

When assembled together at the Lord's Table, you are called on, by a selection of appropriate passages, to contribute according to your means to the relief of your poorer brethren. Thus an opportunity is given you of showing your faith by your works. Our Saviour seems to suppose we should never come here before the Lord without a gift. Matt. v. 23. [These passages need not be repeated, as they are found in the service, which it is hoped will be referred to particularly while the reader is engaged in this part of the treatise.]

[While these sentences are reading the proper persons are to receive the alms of the congregation, which money is to be devoted to the poor and to other pious uses.]

At giving your alms, this, or the like ejaculation may be used:

All things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. 1 Chron. xxix. 14.

Our charity towards our fellow creatures, and especially towards our fellow Christians, is further manifested by an earnest prayer for the whole state of Christ's Church militant.

[To this prayer succeeds an exhortation, which is only used at the communion; and which is particularly worthy the attention of all from the deeply solemn considerations which it presents to the mind.]

In it we are here specially urged to self-examination and thankfulness. Self-examination is urged on account of the danger of coming unworthily. The word "damnation" must not here be understood of eternal destruction, but the just condemnation and displeasure of God.* Self-examination is also pressed on our attention from the benefit of duly receiving, as then we are partakers of Christ's salvation, "we dwell in Christ and Christ in us." What an intimate and blessed communion does this describe! O reader,

* See the passage from Corinthians, particularly examined in Chapter VIII.—G. T. B.

seek to know its blessedness in your own experience! We are called on in the latter part of the exhortation, to be thankful for the inestimable benefit of redemption, the chief thing ever to be regarded in the Lord's Supper. Notice the confession, *miserable sinners*, &c. Have you felt that this is your true character? It is easy to express this sentiment, but it is very difficult really to feel it. Yet without a real conviction of your true state, you cannot be cordially thankful for your redemption. You can neither duly prize, nor heartily thank, Jesus Christ. The latter part of the exhortation shows us, that the true comfort of the soul is, Christ crucified for our sins, and Christ expected to appear again, to complete our happiness. We should hear the whole in the spirit of prayer, sending up in secret such ejaculations as these, "Lord grant that I may receive these benefits." "Lord deliver me from this danger."

The characters by whom comfort may be expected are described in the following ADDRESS:—

Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways; draw near with faith, and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort; and make your humble confession to Almighty God, kneeling.*

While this is repeating by the Minister, we should also be lifting up our hearts to God, to give us grace to repent, and be in love with others, and walk in the ways of God.

To this succeeds a general CONFESSION to be made by both the Minister and people, all kneeling.†

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* See these qualifications enlarged on in Chapter IX.—G. T. B.

† There seems some considerable deficiency in the rubric, as it regards the posture to be maintained by the people during the several parts of the communion service. The following judicious remarks of Bishop Brownell in his

We here, in most just and abasing expressions, deplore our sinfulness. This confession should lead us

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Commentary on the Book of Common Prayer, are well worthy the attention of all.—"There is often much diversity in the same congregation; and individuals are embarrassed with considerations concerning the attitude which propriety requires, while they should be engaged in the most solemn acts of devotion. The English Liturgy is not more explicit in this matter than our own; and it is much to be wished that we might have some proper regulations set forth by authority. Until this shall be done, the following directions are suggested as the dictates of propriety.

1st. The people are supposed to be seated during the offertory, but when the minister calls upon them to join in prayer "for the whole state of Christ's Church Militant," let them assume the attitude of kneeling.

2d. At the close of this prayer, let the people rise and continue standing during the exhortation, and the invitation to the communion. This attitude will indicate their readiness to hear, and their willingness to come. Indeed the succeeding rubric must suppose them to be standing, (or in the less appropriate posture of sitting,) for it calls upon them to kneel, at the confession which follows.

3d. As the posture of kneeling is required during the confession, so let it be continued till the close of the absolution.

4th. After the absolution the priest calls upon the communicants, to hear the comfortable words of their Saviour, and here let them rise, and listen to them with gratitude, and let them continue standing during the sentence, the versicles, the proper preface, and the trisagium.

5th. This Eucharistic part of the service is followed by an act of humiliation by the priest, "in the name of all those who shall receive the communion." As he is directed to kneel, it is proper that they should assume the same posture; and it seems also proper that they should continue in the same attitude during the succeeding prayer of consecration.

6th. This most solemn part of the service is followed by the singing of a hymn, which is performed standing.

7th. The consecrated bread and wine is directed to be received "devoutly kneeling:" and this should be the posture during the whole of the post-communion service, with the exception of the Gloria in Excelsis, which is to be "said or sung, all standing."—G. T. B.

to think of our own personal guilt in any light that may most affect us, and to charge our memory with those views of our own iniquity, which we know by experience, most humble us, and show us with peculiar emphasis, the need which we have of Christ's blood. But while we have reason with the deepest contrition, to confess that the burden of our sins is intolerable,* (being a load that would have sunk us to eternal ruin) let us endeavour to keep our eye on Christ, and by faith transfer our guilt over to him, bewailing our utter unworthiness, glorying in his worthiness, and soliciting through him, not only peace of conscience, but strength for serving him in newness of life.

The ABSOLUTION, or declaration of forgiveness, is then pronounced by the Priest.

All who heartily repent and truly believe, all who have with any feeling joined in the preceding service,

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* The language which is here employed is so strong, that it has been a stumbling block in the way of many an individual, who would have gladly, and I have no doubt with proper preparation of heart, have knelt at the Lord's Table. The correct understanding of the passage seems to be, not that the sorrow which we that moment feel for sin, is so extreme as to be almost utterly unsupportable, but that the guilt of sin is such that if not removed, it will bring upon us a punishment greater than we can imagine, and intolerable to be borne. If in the use of this confession, we are to understand the term alluded to in its strictest sense, a really conscientious person might feel compelled to abstain unless conviction of sin was in its deepest exercise. This can scarcely then be meant, because a sinner under his first convictions can realize little more than what is implied in the confession, that the burden of sin was intolerable. I would not wish to make the qualifications of a communicant one item less than what is written—indeed I think it a pity that the scale is not graduated higher than it commonly is, but at the same time I would not throw an impediment in the way of those of tender consciences; for it is a well ascertained fact, that those best prepared most generally are most doubtful of themselves. If the interpretation above given shall be correct, I am satisfied; but wish every one to be fully persuaded in his own mind.—G. T. B

may and should here apply to themselves the comfort of the Gospel as declared by the appointed Minister of Christ. But man's words cannot of themselves speak peace to the troubled conscience; and therefore the Minister's declaration of forgiveness is confirmed by well chosen passages of Scripture, of course not necessary here to repeat.

These passages should be heard in faith and prayer. They are indeed most comfortable. They tell the weary, burdened, and troubled conscience—Take not God's pardon on my word, I have a commission from above. Hear our Saviour Christ, hear St. Paul, hear St. John speak and say, "Poor, burdened, troubled sinner, here is peace for thee; Christ takes away all thy sins, and will give thee everlasting life."

It will have been seen, that there is set forth in this service, as has been noticed, one of the most solemn transactions, that can take place on earth between God and man. "If we have been in earnest, if we have rightly joined in it, we are justified by faith, we rejoice in God, and we have peace of conscience. High, and holy, and blessed is our state; we are children of God, and heirs of everlasting life."

[After this follows a very short responding part, and after a pious acknowledgment by the Priest of the duty of at all times giving thanks to God for his mercy, follows one of the most sublime hymns which is to be found among all human compositions; indeed, it can scarcely be said to be human, as the language is almost exclusively that of the scripture.

Dean Comber remarks—The prophet Isaiah heard that hymn with which the angels, cherubims, and seraphims praised God in heaven, (Isa. vi. 3;) which because the word "holy" is thrice repeated in it, was by the Greeks called Trisagium; and because the primitive church believed the angels were present in Christian assemblies, (1 Cor. xi. 10;) and that they desired especially to look into these mysteries, (1 Pet. i. 12;) considering also that the "thrice holy" plainly declares the trinity, the peculiar doctrine of the Christians; therefore they did, in the very first ages, take

this hymn into the office for the Sacrament, believing it fit for angels and men to join in this heavenly song, over the memorial of our redemption.]

After these holy songs of praise, the minister offers up, in the name of the congregation, that most affecting prayer, which commences—

WE do not presume to come to this thy table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, &c.

In this prayer the church adopts similar expressions to those of Daniel, of the humble and lowly feelings which most become us after our best preparations, and in our highest devotions, and most intimate communion with God. "We do not presume to come, trusting in our own righteousness." There appears also an evident allusion to the history of the Canaanitish woman, only with a still more debasing expression: she said, *The dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their master's table;* (Matt. xv. 27;) but we are taught with our heart and mouth to confess ourselves "not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs," &c. In stating our title to God's acceptance, all our works are to be utterly renounced as of no worth. The worthiness of Christ is all we have to plead.

[The Priest then says the prayer of consecration, the oblation, and the invocation. These two latter are not in the English service. They were restored to the Communion Service by the General Convention of 1789, from prayers originally employed.

After these are over the communicants are called upon to unite in a hymn of praise to God, from the authorised hymns of the Prayer Book.

The Minister then receives the communion himself, during which silent and solemn period, the communicants may be profitably occupied in the following, or similar exercises.]

At the Minister's laying his hands on, and breaking the bread.

May thy stripes, O Saviour! heal my soul; and do thou ever feed me with the bread of life.

At the Minister's taking the cup.

Wash me, O Lord Christ! in thy most precious blood, and cleanse me from all my sins.

Before receiving the sacred elements.

The good Lord pardon me, and every one that prepareth his heart to seek God, the Lord God of his fathers, though he be not cleansed according to the purification of the sanctuary. 2 Chron. xxx. 18, 19.

The consecrated elements are to be given to the people kneeling.

If there are many communicants, you may find this a suitable opportunity for private prayer and meditation. See chapters iii. and v. in this part of the Treatise.

When the Minister delivers the bread to any one, he says,	*And when he delivers the cup to any one, he says,*
The body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith with thanksgiving.	The blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life. Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for thee, and be thankful.

In both these addresses we have a prayer and a direction. The prayer should lead us to commit our whole selves, body, soul, and spirit, unto God; and the direction puts us in mind, in the very act of receiving, of one great end of this ordinance, to feed on Christ in our hearts by faith, with thanksgiving.—"When the Minister says, Take eat, Drink ye all of it, let us think how freely God offers Christ to us, and

how earnestly he presses us to accept of him as our Saviour." And surely, as we have fresh need of pardon every time that we communicate, so should we afresh seek an interest in our Saviour's righteousness, and the washing and cleansing of his most precious blood.

Such thoughts as these may suitably engage our minds.

At taking the Bread.

I desire to remember Jesus Christ dying on the cross.
I believe that he gave himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God.
Let me now receive out of his fulness all I need.
I trust in him alone for eternal life.
I take Christ for my only Saviour and Lord.
I give myself to his service.
I look forward to his coming again.

At drinking the Wine.

I desire to remember that his blood was shed for me.
I believe that that blood cleanseth from all sin.
I mourn for my many sins that pierced him.
I humbly lay claim to the New Covenant blessings.
I freely and heartily forgive all my enemies.
I desire ardently to love all the people of Christ.
All praise be to God for his unspeakable gift.

The Post Communion, or service immediately after receiving, begins with repeating again the Lord's Prayer, which after such services as have been described, may well affect us with new feelings, leading us to call on our Heavenly Father with a peculiar measure of the spirit of adoption.

A devout thanksgiving is then offered up, in which also we ask for grace to continue in the holy fellowship to which we have been admitted. The language

is expressive of the feelings of a mind which came indeed with a load of guilt and bondage on the conscience, but goes away pardoned, peaceful, and free. There is an opposite danger to that of self-righteous dependence on the Sacrament, that of having too slight thoughts of its utility. Milner observes, "well-disposed persons who often gain both spiritual comfort and strength through sermons, gain nothing from the sacrament. Why is this? They are in too lazy a posture of soul; they do not reverently esteem, as they should, this precious mean of grace, as the channel in which the comforts of salvation may be expected richly to flow. Our Reformers speak differently of the importance of this Institution. From the expression, 'dost assure us thereby of thy favour and goodness towards us, and that we are very members incorporate in the mystical body of thy Son,' it is evident that the blessing of assurance was in their idea connected with the right reception of this ordinance." Yet many who obtain not the full assurance of hope, seeking the Lord in earnest, still gain some increase of faith, hope, and love. The consecration here made of ourselves to be "a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice to God," comes with great propriety after the memorial of such mercies. It is according to that exhortation of St. Paul,—*I beseech you, therefore, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice.* The love of God in Christ Jesus, when brought home to the heart by the Holy Spirit, never fails of its efficacy in influencing a man to give himself unreservedly to God.

[The concluding hymn of praise is in that sublime thanksgiving, entitled "Gloria in Excelsis."]

This hymn seems to unite the seraphic praise of the glorified hosts above, with the deep abasement of the contrite heart on earth. We here copy the example of our Saviour, who sang a hymn after the institution of the Lord's Supper. O had we a due sense of our privileges as sons of God, and our prospects as heirs of his glory, with what rapturous emotion, joined to what deep humility, should we sing this song!

The Minister closes the whole with this BLESSING:

THE peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord: and the blessing of God Almighty the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you and remain with you always. Amen.

This blessing seems to include the main benefits of both Dispensations; that of Moses, (Numb. vi. 24—26,) and that of the Lamb, (John xiv. 27; Phil. iv. 7.) It is a parting prayer, that the benefits which we have just received and commemorated, may abide in our hearts for ever.

Inquire then, Christian communicant, whether your feelings in some degree correspond with the holy sentiments of this service. Such an inquiry will be both humbling and profitable. "We would be far from denying the acceptableness of many a real communicant who may not come up to that full fervour of soul which is evidently the spirit of the institution." But by aiming at the highest degree of communion with our unseen but ever present Lord and Saviour, we are best promoting our own edification and happiness.

Who can but mourn, that any that frequent this ordinance should be dead to every spiritual sensation, go through the whole in a formal lifeless manner, and depart as cold and worldly as ever.

But what shall we say to those who frequently, or altogether, deprive themselves of the benefits of this institution. They are like those who would prefer dwelling in a miserable and decaying hovel, when they might reside in a king's palace. They are like those who had rather feed on husks and swine, than banquet at the table of a loving and bountiful Father.

Christians! neglect not the opportunities afforded you of receiving the pledges of a Father's love. Can you too often remember the grace of a dying Saviour? Can you, more frequently than you desire, receive the assurance that God is reconciled to you; that his Spirit

dwells in you, that you are his children and that heaven is your home? These are the blessings you enjoy when devoutly partaking of the Lord's Supper.

CHAPTER V.

Meditations during the Communion.

We have given in a former Chapter directions for the employment of the mind in the interval while others are partaking of the communion. We will now add a few meditations that may occasionally assist the communicant at that time.

Prov. iv. 26. *Ponder the path of thy feet.*

If ever it be needful to ponder my goings, surely it is so on this occasion. Let me inquire, then, with what views am I coming to this holy table?

I come, I trust, to commemorate the death of Christ; to call to remembrance that sacrifice of himself which he once made upon the cross; to profess my faith in Christ crucified; to declare before God and man that I look to him as my only Saviour and Redeemer, who has made a complete atonement for my sins, and has reconciled my God to me, and me to my God. I come to receive the tokens of reconciliation, and the pledges of pardon and love.

Looking to my Saviour, I come that I may receive from him all that is wanting in my wretched self. *He is full of grace and truth.* He has called me to do this in remembrance of him; and I come, hoping for his blessing on what he himself has appointed.

Looking at myself, I come as an unworthy, sinful, and dreadfully guilty creature, to the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness; not because I am worthy, but because my God is merciful to returning sinners.

Looking at *the society which I join*, the select disciples of Christ, I desire to come feeling that I am the unworthiest and the least of all, and to acknowledge

with them our common hope in one Lord, and to partake of their privileges, and enjoy in, and with them, the communion of saints.

O my Saviour, preserve me from hypocrisy, formality, and self-righteousness: and let me never by my conduct betray thee, while I am professing to embrace thee.

1 Pet. v. 1. *The Sufferings of Christ.*

"O my Saviour, and my God, I desire to call to mind every part of thy bitter passion. I would begin by recollecting thy lying prostrate on the earth in a cold night, and thy soul's being exceeding sorrowful even unto death, and thy grievous agony, in which thou didst sweat drops of blood.

"Thrice did my Redeemer lift up strong cries to his Father, to remove that bitter cup, if it had been his will, and it had been possible for his justice otherwise to be satisfied; and then firmly did he resolve to go through that great work for our sakes. He meekly resigned himself to his Father's will, and readily concurred with his wonderful love to us, in designing to perfect our redemption.—He was betrayed by his own disciple, and suffered that traitor who betrayed him to kiss his blessed lips. He was apprehended, rudely bound, and hurried away as a malefactor, and forsaken by all, not one of his disciples daring to own or stand by him.

"Again, I would remember his being insulted over and treated as the meanest slave, without respect, or pity, and carried to and fro, from magistrate to magistrate, from tribunal to tribunal, and every where falsely accused. He was buffeted and spit upon, mocked and reviled. He was crowned with thorns, rudely pressed down on his sacred head, and entering into his temples. He was arrayed in a mock habit, and a reed put into his hand instead of a sceptre. He was sentenced to death as a criminal, and condemned to the vilest, most painful, and reproachful kind of death. He was scourged by merciless hands; the plowers plowing on his back, and making long furrows.

"I would further contemplate his being loaded with a heavy cross, stripped of his clothes, and fastened to the wood with nails, through the sacred hands and feet, the most tender and nervous parts, so that *the iron entered into his very soul*. Thus he was crucified in the midst, between two malefactors, as if the chief criminal. He was then reared up on the cross, and the weight of his body tore his wounds. He was there suspended, a spectacle exposed to the view of the world, bearing the shame, as well as the torment of my sin. The precious blood issued out of his wounds, and formed a laver for my sins, and those of the whole world. The extremity of his pain occasioned a feverish heat of the whole body, and his tongue cleaved to the roof of his mouth. He had vinegar given to him when he was thirsty; his soul, in the mean time, more vehemently thirsting after our salvation. He refused the wine and myrrh, as if he would feel all the pain of his crucifixion for us, in its greatest sharpness, without the least mitigation.

"I would call to mind also the tender regard which thou hadst, O my Saviour, in the midst of thy violent pains, for thy holy mother and beloved disciple; the sword pierced through her soul, and deep sorrow wounded his spirit, and extreme anguish overwhelmed them both, to behold the suffering Redeemer; and in the midst of thy sorrows thou thoughtest of them. What gracious comforts also thou vouchsafed the penitent thief in the midst of thy own distress.

"O how great was the inexpressible anguish of our Saviour's soul in beholding the wrath of his Father so hotly flaming against us for those sins of ours, which he did *bear in his own body on the tree;* and that, too, under so great weakness of body, that both made him cry out, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!* He gave up the ghost, when he might have brought down himself from the cross, and no man could take away his life from him, that the work of our redemption might be finished by him. His blessed side was pierced with a spear, entering into his heart, and letting out the last remains of his blood, that he might

give full proof to the world of his being truly dead. His soul was separated from the body, and passed into the state of the dead and of perfect separation, sanctifying that middle state to his servants for their souls to rest in till the resurrection.

"And by all these several sorts and degrees of thy suffering, by all this bitter pain, and sorrow, and shame, and agony, and anguish, which thou didst endure in thy body, and in thy soul, for miserable men, and for me a miserable sinner, I now entreat thee to have mercy upon me, and forgive me; to save me, and bless me.

"Since then, O my Saviour, thou commandest me to commemorate these thy sorrows, and to do this in remembrance of thee: I eat of this bread, and drink of this cup, in remembrance that I have wounded, and grieved, and bruised thee: in remembrance that I have made thee behold the wrath of thy Father, and separated thy precious blood from thy body. But at the same time, the thoughts of thy wonderful love, in the midst of thy pains and sorrows, must yield my soul unspeakable delight. Wherefore, while I am grieved with thy grief, I will feast myself in the pleasures and triumphs of thy love. I will partake of thy torments and also of thy joys, which thy love did yield in the midst of thy agonies."*

Isa. liii. 5. *He was wounded for our transgressions.*

O my Redeemer, kind, unspeakably kind, to poor sinners wert thou in all thy life, thy sufferings, and thy death. I would ever contemplate the mysteries of thy cross, as expiating my sins and displaying the wonders of divine love. O the love and the wisdom of God, *which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.* They *denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto them, and killed the Prince of life.* In every wound would I see another token and proof of thy tenderness and grace.

* Altered from a meditation of Bonnell's.

"Let thy wounds then prove the most powerful remedies to rid me of my corruptions! When any impure thoughts rise in me, let thinking of thy wounds crush them; when sluggishness in religion assaults me, let thy wounds and the remembrance of them make me vigilant in thy service; and when in the holy sacrament I think of thy wounds, let all my vain imaginations expire."

Let me then ever remember Christ. "He did not forget us. He thought of us in his own extremity. At his death he regarded us more than he did himself. He put up many a petition for us, but few for himself. In the garden, on the cross, and in the grave, his lost sheep were still in his mind. He thought of them both day and night." And from the height of his glory, amid the worship of the heavenly world, the Saviour still regards his people on earth. "Unworthy as they are, he loves them; mean as they are, he is not ashamed to wear their form, and call them brethren. He forgets the songs of angels to listen to their sighs and prayers. It is his delight to minister to their wants, to protect them in their dangers, and to comfort them in their sorrows."* O may I never forget his love!

John i. 29. *Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.*

Contemplate, O my soul, thy Saviour as a lamb slain for thee. "Rightly is he called a lamb, whose innocence was spotless, and his meekness and patience invincible; and the Lamb of God for his superior excellence and dignity, and his being chosen to this office by the Father. *He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before his shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth:* neither guile nor complaint was found in him. Dost thou then profess thyself a follower of the Lamb, and glory in the title? Learn, then, of him to be harmless and blameless, meek and lowly in heart, alike averse from doing and deserving evil, and ready to suffer it.

* See Bradley's Sermons.

"But how does the Lamb of God take away sin? By bearing it *in his own body on the tree; the chastisement of our peace was upon him.* O heavy load, which sunk the Son of God in his human body to the grave: and had it lain unremoved, would have sunk the whole world in ruins! *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.*"*

Luke xxiii. 42. *And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.*

O suffering Saviour! like the dying thief would I look to thee with this petition. Thou that saved him and declared to him, *This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise*, O do thou make me also an illustrious trophy of thy mighty grace. I would look to thy wounds for my pardon, to thy merits alone for my justification. I acknowledge, I feel that I deserve nothing; but Jesus, remember me, even me, amid the assembled millions who will stand before thee in judgment at the great day of account. And, O may I never forget thee; but, filled with a sense of thy love, spend my whole time and strength, and all I am, and all I have, for my Redeemer.

John vi. 56. *He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him.*

In such a passage, let me never rest in the outward emblem, but look through the figure to the truth, and by the sign realize the thing signified. Our Lord has assured me his words here are *spirit* and *life*. May I then have a spiritual appetite for this spiritual food! O may the Holy Spirit give me a just and lively sense of my guilt and misery, and of my great need of Christ, so that I may earnestly long for, and, as with a keen and discriminating appetite, hunger and thirst after his salvation. I would now by faith realize, and receive out of, that fulness which there is in him for

* Grove.

our use. He took upon him my nature, and is touched with a feeling of my infirmities. He is my Shepherd, who laid down his life for me. He is my Priest, who made atonement for my sins, and intercedes in my behalf. He gave himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God. He is my complete Saviour, delivering me from all my sins. He has wisdom, power, grace, and compassion, adapted to all my wants. His love passeth knowledge. He shed his blood for me, a miserable and perishing sinner, and that blood cleanses from all sin. He is the propitiation for our sins. I believe this from my very heart. I rely upon him as my only Saviour. I would now, through the bread and wine, view afresh the atoning death of my Lord. My eyes look unto thee, O gracious Redeemer. O my soul, and all that is within me, praise and magnify the Lord, who died, who rose again, who intercedes for thee, and who is now present in the assembly of his people. Thus let me abide in him, and he give me his Spirit, and dwell in my heart by faith; thus may I enjoy an increasing communion with him as my all-satisfying portion, my joy, and my strength; thus may my appetite for the world and its pleasures be taken away; and may I find Christ and his salvation to be *meat indeed* and *drink indeed*, to my needy soul.

Matt. xxvi. 26. *Take, eat; this is my body.*

"O blessed tidings to the poor distressed soul, famished with feeding on husks and vanity. Behold, thou sayest, *take, eat*, offering thyself unto me, and commanding me to feast on thine own flesh, on thy all-sufficient atonement, yea, on all thy merits and graces. Lord! thou tenderest most freely what I need infinitely, and that which I desire above all things. Adored be thy wonderful bounty, in compliance wherewith, (unworthy as I am,) I yet stretch out a trembling hand to take hold of Christ. O may I now receive Jesus as my Lord, believe on his name, and live upon his fulness."*

* Comber.

Luke xxiii. 34. *Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.*

O thou gracious Redeemer, the Prince of Peace; thou compassionate Saviour, the Lord of Glory; give me grace so that I may ever hereafter show myself loving and mild to all my enemies, pardon them from my heart, earnestly pray for them, and seek to do them good.

O Jesus! let me never harbour one rancorous, malicious, or unkind thought in that heart, in which I trust thou, the loving Saviour, now dwellest by faith. But may I become more like thee, O Christ! in my spirit and behaviour towards all with whom I have to deal. Shalt thou freely forgive and wonderfully extenuate such aggravated injuries as were inflicted on thee; and shall not I freely forgive the infinitely smaller trespasses that may be committed against me? O let me have *the same mind that was in Christ.*

MEDITATIONS ON THE FESTIVALS OF THE CHURCH.

CHRISTMAS-DAY.

Luke xxii. 19. *This is my body which is given for you.*

And was the Son of God made in the likeness of sinful flesh, so that his sacred body might be given for me? O glorious ransom price for my recovery! Most complete must be that redemption for which so great a price was paid. Yes, Christ my Lord, whose name is called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, and The Prince of Peace, was born of a virgin, and took our nature upon him, that he might, by suffering for sin, satisfy the justice, and appease the righteous anger of a holy God! And to what a life was his holy child Jesus born! O Jesus, I would now recollect that thy body was given to weariness, labour, painfulness, and

watchings oft. It was given to treatment most shameful and most tormenting; to spitting, smiting, and cruel mockings; to the lashes of the whip, to the thorns, the nails, the cross, the spear, death, and the grave. All this, and thy Father's sensible and felt desertion, was suffered for us men, and for our Salvation. Thus my body was redeemed from the power of sin and Satan, and recovered to light, life, and joy. Precious Saviour! the gift of thy body procures for me pardon and peace. O then let me give my body and soul to thee; let them not any longer be yielded to the degrading service of sin, but become wholly thine. Expel every enemy of thine and of mine; and come blessed Redeemer, and dwell in my heart by faith every day. May love to thee fill and pervade my whole soul, and constrain me to live wholly to thee.

EASTER-DAY.

1 Cor. xv. 20. *Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept.*

While we specially at the Lord's Table, seem to sit at the foot of the cross, and commemorate our Saviour's death, we may still rejoice in the recollection that *Christ is indeed risen.* If Christ were not raised, then, truly *faith* in him *is vain*, and we are yet in our sins. But never was a fact so fully proved and established as this fact was. Let me then now contemplate this great and all-important fact. His resurrection is the foundation of my hope; it declares him to be the Son of God, and a Redeemer mighty to save: it shows that we are justified and secured from condemnation, and is the means of our spiritual life. O Lord my God, not only give me a firm and unshaken confidence in this great fact; but grant that I may remember it with unfeigned gratitude, and let me receive from my risen Saviour, all those blessings which he is exalted to bestow.

But especially would I derive comfort from looking at his resurrection, as a type and pledge of the be-

liever's rising from the grave. As he rose, so shall we rise also. How cheering to the mind awakened to a sense of the nearness and magnitude of eternity, is the conviction that through Christ death has now lost its sting, and the grave its victory. *Whosoever believeth in him shall never die.* Death shall be but the gate of life, the beginning of endless joy.

Rom. iv. 25. *Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.*

"I will go to thy table with joy, and tell out thy works with gladness, O most mighty Saviour, who hast not only died for my sins, but risen again for my justification. Indeed, what comfort would I have found in this memorial of thy death, if it had not been for thy resurrection. This Sacrament then would only have represented thy sufferings, and renewed my sorrow, to think that so excellent a person had failed of my deliverance; but now it is become a feast of joy, because it is an assurance of thy resurrection, as well as a commemoration of thy passion. Since thou livest, glorified Jesus, we live also. Thy resurrection gives life to our hopes, makes our sorrows light, our lives cheerful, and our death the gate of immortality. Our fears are dispelled, and our troubled hearts are quieted with this,—*The Lord* is risen; yea, *the Lord is risen indeed.*"*

ASCENSION-DAY.

Luke xxiv. 51. *And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them and carried up into heaven.*

How full of love, even to the end, was our adorable Lord! The last words sounding in the ears of his disciples was a blessing. He ascended to heaven blessing them, and still is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. O ascended Saviour, may my heart rise whither thou art gone; and now Christ is gone to heaven, may

* Comber.

my affections be set on things above. *I know that my Redeemer liveth.* This is a blessed confidence that can support the soul in the severest trials. He makes himself known *too in the breaking of bread.* I would not then only remember his death; but, looking at his ascension, see the power given to him, mark the gifts which he has received, dwell upon the work which he is now carrying on, and daily come to him, and hold communion with him.

Remember, too, O my soul, *this same Jesus which* was thus *taken up into heaven,* shall *so come in like manner,* as he was seen *going into heaven.* Now at his table, I profess my expectation of his coming again. O may I be always ready for that day. The Lord in mercy grant that this sacred institution may raise my heart to my ascended Saviour, and lead me to look, and diligently prepare, for his second coming.

WHIT-SUNDAY.

Acts xix. 2. *Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed.*

Where true faith is, there are also the gracious influences of the Spirit; O may I so believe as to receive the Holy Spirit, which is the seal of God, (Eph. i. 13,) showing who are his redeemed people. Give unto me all the evidences which distinguish those who have received this gift. *They are born of the Spirit.* O Lord, produce in me the new heart and the new spirit, the daily turning from darkness to light, from sin to holiness, and from the world to God my Saviour. *They have the spirit of prayer.* O raise my heart constantly to thee in holy aspirations through the day, and give me real desires after thee in public, family, and social worship, so that I may never be content with a formal round of duties. *They mortify the deeds of the body.* The Lord grant that I too may strive against every temptation, resist sin, and never yield to carnal indulgences. *They bring forth the fruits of righteousness.* O that I may manifestly bear the fruit of love, joy,

peace, gentleness, goodness, meekness, long-suffering, faith, and temperance.

O Lord, my Heavenly Father, I would feel and acknowledge that though, through thy great mercy, I am not I trust wholly barren of spiritual fruit, yet there is little indeed brought forth that may glorify God, and adorn the doctrine of my Saviour. O thou who hearest prayer, and givest good things to them that ask, give me that best gift—thy Holy Spirit.

"Behold thy Spirit hath converted and sanctified millions; let me therefore, together with thy whole church, receive here such proportions of thy Holy Spirit, as may suppress my evil affections, revive my dead heart, comfort my dejected mind, and turn my ignorance, disobedience, and sorrow, into knowledge, and practice, and holy joy. Let the Spirit rest upon me, and dwell in me for ever, so that I may always have cause to bless thee for so incomparable a gift."

TRINITY-SUNDAY.

Ephes. ii. 18. *Through him we both have access by one Spirit unto the Father.*

Jesus, our Lord, having reconciled us to God by the cross, may I practically know what it is to have access unto him, through Christ by the Spirit. I desire to know the great and glorious doctrine of this day, not as a matter of theory, or belief merely, but as a thing of experience, and daily practice. Deliver me from a proud and presumptuous spirit, that would cavil at thy truth. Deliver me from a too curious and prying spirit, that would attempt to comprehend that which it has not pleased thee to reveal. Give me grace in all simplicity of heart, to receive what thou hast declared, and, feeling my own ignorance and nothingness, to adore thee in thy incomprehensible Majesty, and unsearchable Glory.

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, I come to thee as one that spared not thy beloved Son for us, and art now reconciled by him; and I beseech thee, receive, provide for, and bless me.

Blessed Redeemer, thou art the way, the truth, and the life, my mediator and my advocate, my hope is in thy merits and thy intercession.

Holy Spirit, the Comforter, who showest the Saviour to sinners, I look to thee to teach and guide, to purify, strengthen, and console me.

PRAYER AFTER RECEIVING THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Thanks be unto thee, Holy Father, Lord God Almighty; thanks be unto thee for the privilege which thou hast given me of uniting with thy people to commemorate the sacrifice of the death of the Lord Jesus Christ, and for all the edification and comfort thus given to me.

O that this solemnity may so deeply and so permanently affect my heart, as constantly to influence my future life. Let the love of Christ now at length constrain me no longer to live to myself, but to him who died for me.

Pardon all in this service that was not right before thee. All I do is defiled with sin; but I offer every service unto thee in the name of Jesus alone. I bless thee, through him, for whatever thy spirit enabled me to do in any measure agreeably to thy holy will. But my whole hope and trust is in the sacrifice of Christ Jesus, which I have been now commemorating, to atone not only for former transgressions, but for all the failings and defects of my preparation, and performances even at this solemn feast. Lord, spare me, and accept me on account of that great propitiation for the sins of the whole world.

O that I may ever remember that the vows of the Lord are upon me, and that I am thine, irrevocably thine, and may I walk from day to day as becomes a child of God and an heir of his glory. Keep alive in my mind a constant sense of my weakness, and my entire dependence on thy grace. May I now go forth to my duties more humbled and more devoted, more watchful against my spiritual enemies, and more determined to give up all for him who gave up his life for me.

Give unto me, I pray thee, this comfortable evidence

of having had communion with Christ; that my faith in him for supplies in all my way to heaven is manifestly strengthened; that I have the same mind that was in him; have become like him; am copying his example, and treading in his steps. May I watch over my motives as well as my conduct, and do thou deliver me from improper motives, in doing outwardly good works. May I also find in my growing experience more proofs of my being a member of the mystical body of Christ, in that my love to those that belong to him increases, and I can make larger allowances for their infirmities, and more readily do them self-denying services. Nor let my love stop short of the divine pattern of him who loved his worst enemies.

O Lord, I would now, in the fulness of my heart, earnestly pray for the coming of that time, when all that bear the name of Christ shall fulfil his dying precept, and thy table be crowded with believing and joyful guests. O when shall all the ends of the earth look to Jesus and be saved! Hasten it in thy good pleasure, O Lord; that Christ Jesus may be known, loved, and obeyed in every land, and the Lord's name be praised from the rising of the sun to the going down of the same. Thus glorify thy great name, fulfil thy gracious promises, and let thy kingdom be fully established, through Jesus Christ our only Redeemer.—Amen.

APPENDIX.

Essay on the Impropriety and Inconsistency of Communicants engaging in what are called the Amusements of the Age.

In page 143 of the preceding Treatise, the author makes a remark on Christians coming out from the world, its follies, *amusements*, &c. To this I had intended to annex a note, explanatory of my views on the same important, but much overlooked subject.

The matter, however, seemed to require so much consideration, that I found my remarks would exceed the limits which could be allowed to a mere note, and consequently I have been compelled to throw them into the present form; and I earnestly entreat the reader, as the subject appears to me of incalculable importance, not to be alarmed by the length to which I have been carried. I would have treated the subject more briefly, could I have fully satisfied my conscience with less than I have said; but I felt it a duty to speak my sentiments at large, even at the risk of a considerable demand upon his time and patience.

In calling the attention of the public to an edition of such a work as the present, I feel bound in conscience to give my views fully and plainly on the subject of worldly amusements; and I am led more particularly to this course, because the views of a clergyman, on subjects of this kind, are so apt to be misunderstood, and perhaps misrepresented. As the re-publication of this treatise was undertaken with a view to the benefit of my own congregation more especially, the reader, to whom I may be a stranger, will, I trust ex-

cuse the familiarity and apparent egotism into which I have been led. It has always appeared to me, (and in the view I have taken I am happy to state, that I am joined by the great majority of my brethren in the ministry,) that among the generality of the communicants of our churches, there is by far too low a standard of Christian obligation on the score of worldly conformity, particularly on the subject of what are called the *innocent amusements* of the day. For the statements, then, which I am about to give, I would bespeak the candour and attention of the reader, and if I should utter sentiments to which he cannot cordially subscribe, I would only wish him to believe, that I speak according to the dictates of my conscience, and he must not hastily accuse me of uncharitableness, or a wish to abridge the social pleasures of life. I would particularly and earnestly wish to have it understood as preliminary, that my remarks on amusements are confined entirely to those who have professed themselves "on the Lord's side," by eating at his holy table. Whatever may be said of these things, as it regards those who have never made any public profession of religion, (for I look upon the course of all such as one series of errors, without an exception,) I dare not dissemble my entire conviction of the evil of these amusements, as it regards professing Christians.

The grand object of a Christian, especially of one who sits himself forward as a real follower of Christ, is the salvation of his soul; and to this, must every energy of the man be directed; for salvation is a difficult thing—as, asks an apostle, "if the righteous *scarcely* be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"—And if a real Christian has a proper impression of the weakness and infirmity of his nature, he surely should be the last to give the world and nature an undue advantage over him. Besides this, the Scriptures declare that there is a decided and strongly marked difference, between a follower of the Lord, and a mere worldling, and that difference is to be measured, by the actual disagreement in the conduct of the two; and the difference in the conduct,

where that conduct is uniform and consistent, marks the difference in the *principles* by which they are actuated. *Love* to the Saviour, where it is "shed abroad in the heart, by the Holy Ghost," is an absorbing principle; and love to the Saviour, and love to the amusements of the world, are opposite and contradictory. "*Love* not the world, neither the things which are in the world; for whoso loveth the world, the love of the Father is not in him."—True religion, and the world, are, and ever have been, at variance. Our Saviour has not only established this truth, but absolutely laid down the utter impossibility of a neutral state for the soul.—"He that is not with me is against me, and he that gathereth not with me, scattereth abroad." I am fully persuaded, by the experience which I have had in my intercourse with professing Christians, that those, whose conversation was turned upon religious topics, and whose "meat and drink" it appeared to be "to do the will" of their heavenly Father, were the very persons who expressed themselves most strongly on the subject of the *anti-spiritual effects* of worldly conformity; while those, most generally, who gave in to the amusements of the world, seemed to have an indifference and lukewarmness on the subject of religion, which chilled religious intercourse, and painfully impressed me with the idea that they delighted in having their "conversation" every where but "in heaven." This I would be understood as saying, has been my experience *generally*. I have found some exceptions, but they have been rare, and under very extraordinary circumstances.

But I enter on the reasons which have induced me to believe that communicants cannot enter into the amusements of the world and yet maintain a consistent and Christian character.

1st. What are called the common amusements of the world have a direct tendency to destroy every thing like *personal religion*. Apart from the previous circumstances of preparation, which destroy so much of that invaluable talent, *time*, and apart from the unhallowed passions of "envy, hatred, malice, and all

uncharitableness," which dress, and attentions, and such like, are sure to awaken in the mind, which is intently set on amusements as a chief good, the dissipated thoughts, and the wearied body, induce an almost necessary indisposition to the serious exercises of devotion. This is a matter which can fairly attach itself to the experience of the reader, who engages in these amusements; and how can it be supposed, that after many hours spent in nothing but a round of indulgences, a person can return to his home, perhaps far beyond the midnight hour, and spend a sufficient period in those duties of devotion, without which all claims to the Christian character are no more than a "sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal." Whatever interferes with the hour which should be consecrated to God—whatever indisposes to the exercise of that prayer, which is a real Christian's delight, and a conscious sinner's dearest privilege, is totally divested of its character of innocent; and becomes evil and sinful in the highest degree. I know that it is the way of many, to talk of the *abstract innocence* of common amusements; but language of this description has no meaning. I doubt whether any one could tell me, what he meant by amusements *abstractly considered;* and to enjoy an amusement abstractly is to me entirely absurd. These things are completely made up of circumstances, from which they never have and never can be abstracted; and it is in these unavoidable circumstances that the evil is to be found. If attending at the theatre—at public and private balls, and a variety of other things of lesser evil, interfered with no absolute duty to God or man—cut short no hour which ought to have been wholly consecrated to the immediate service of our Maker in prayer and supplication and thanksgiving—produced no languidness of soul —no spiritual weariness—no real waste of time—no unhallowed passions—then might they be enjoyed to the full. It alters not the force of the argument, to say that the evil of these depends on the *excess* to which they are pursued. I have no hesitation in affirming, that they never were, and in the nature of

the thing, they never can be pursued without excess; for if the infringement of a *single duty*, let it be ever so trivial in itself, be the consequence, the pursuit which is the cause of that infringement is excessive and sinful.

It is objected to this, God is so good that surely he never could mean to debar his rational creatures the gratification of the pleasures of this world; and that if to "renounce the pomps and vanities of this wicked world," be understood in the sense, which is contended for by many, the situation of the disciple of Christ would not only be far from enviable, but positively wretched.

An objection of this kind assumes the point, that amusements of the description alluded to are *absolutely necessary* for the happiness of rational creatures; and it consequently deprives all those who conscientiously oppose them, of all claims to any thing like worldly happiness. The objection commencing with an assumption, which is not founded on fact, all subsequent reasoning on it is entirely fallacious. Why should it be thought a hard thing if our Lord, in the self-denying precepts of his religion, should direct his followers to relinquish these vain and trifling pursuits, and enjoyments, and turn their attention to things of a more important and decidedly religious character? Biddulph, in a work on worldly conformity, puts this matter in a very strong light.

"Has the Creator dealt hardly with the papilio, because, in consequence of his ordinance it changes its nature, ceases to crawl on the ground, and mounts aloft in the air, deriving its pleasure from a new source? Has the captive, long a prisoner and a slave in the Siberian mines, any reason for accusing his sovereign of barbarity when his chains are knocked off, and he is restored to the light of day, and to the pleasures of society on the surface of the earth; because he is now separated from those low gratifications to which he was obliged to resort for want of better, while he was confined in subterranean caverns? The objection is built on falsehood: for it supposes the things of the world to be suited to the faculties of

an immortal mind, which is made for the enjoyment of God, and which nothing but God, his favour, and friendship, can ever satisfy. But the believer is become, by regeneration, "a new creature; old things are passed away, and all things are become new." The aspect of all those things with which he has hitherto been conversant is now changed. The follies of the world have lost their power of giving him contentment; if, indeed, they can be said to afford it to any persons. His hopes and fears, his desires and aversions, his joys and sorrows, arise from new causes, and are directed to new ends. What he receives in lieu of the bubble which he relinquishes, is sterling gold. Had the prodigal son any cause of complaint when in consequence of the gracious reception which his father gave him, he was no longer under a necessity of feeding on husks with the swine which his former master had set him to keep? Let the Christian who is enjoying the privileges of his profession, be asked, Whether the requisition of renouncing the world be harsh; and whether God who makes it be an Egyptian task-master. He will know how to answer the question, by replying, "I am dead; and my life is hid with Christ in God."*

2d. Another very prominent evil, arising from the circumstance of communicants attending amusements of the description all along alluded to, is, that it weakens the influence of religion in the minds of others. Let those communicants who indulge in these amusements think what they please on the subject, the fact is unquestioned, that the eye of the world is upon them; and from them is expected, even by those who care nothing about religion, a consistent, and godly, outward demeanour; and it were folly for them to attempt to conceal the truth, that the conduct they pursue, brings a measure of reproach on religion, by lowering it to the level of the world. A professing Christian is supposed to stand on an eminence of spiritual attainment, far above the common mass by

* Col. iii. 3.

which he is surrounded; and where that character is truly *possessed*, as well as *professed*, the supposition is most correct. About the real Christian character, while there is a mildness and sweetness of deportment, which makes men admire and love, there is also a gravity and dignity of deportment which can make no fellowship with the lightness and frivolity of a theatre or ball-room. A professing Christian then, engaged in such pursuits, loses at once the dignity of his assumed character, and lets himself down to the level of those who make no pretensions to religion. I have heard it asserted by many, who were "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God," that though they engaged in such scenes, yet they could not but *lose respect* for those who called themselves Christians, when they saw them as fond of these vanities as themselves; and that they were consequently fully impressed with the idea that religion set very lightly upon them. The conclusion of such persons is undoubtedly legitimate, and it is one, among the many tributes, which mere worldly men pay to religion, that they think it demands a more circumspect and dignified demeanour; and absolutely requires a measure of consistency which is apart from the love and practice of these follies. I say it, because I know it to be true, that the most frivolous of the giddy throng, whose motto seems to be "let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die," look with the utmost suspicion on the religion of those, who engage with them in their pursuits, and not only *think*, but *speak* unfavourably of them, and of consequence of the religion which they profess. Professing Christians then, enter ye the theatre—the ball-room—sit down to cards, and such like, and the very persons, with whom you are engaged, while they consent that you should minister to their pleasure, censure you in their hearts; and did they dare, or were they honest enough, to tell you what they thought, they would confess to you that you had lost in their respect.

3d. Another reason why it is evil for communicants to join in these amusements is, that it is a stumbling block

in the way of many, and gives unnecessary offence to the feelings and views of many a Christian brother.

This is a consideration which is far from receiving that attention its importance demands. One man's crime is not indeed another man's excuse. The inconsistency of some professors, is no reason why any one should abstain from the Lord's Table, but so it is; and as Christianity is a self-denying religion, the sacrifice is absolutely demanded on the part of professors.—If engaging in these amusements were in no other sense injurious, either to personal piety, or to the respect in which religion ought to be entertained, still if the conduct pursued is the cause of another's stumbling—or if the feelings of a pious friend, be found to be hurt—if I make not the sacrifice, I deal uncharitably with him, for it is to be recollected that abstaining from these amusements involves no principle, and interferes with no absolute happiness. Strange as these opinions may appear to many, they are not only drawn from the Scripture without perversion, but they are the very sentiments of Scripture, without even the suspicion of being merely implied. I wish that on this subject, my readers who have any doubt as to the correctness of these statements, would attentively study, and seriously pray over, the 14th chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, the 8th and 10th chapters of his 1st Epistle to the Corinthians, and a part of the 2d chapter of his 2d Epistle to the same; as also those injunctions of our Saviour in reference to self-denial and to love of the world. If indulgence in these pleasures were *lawful*, Christian charity demands that for the honour of Christ and the prejudices of weaker brethren, this indulgence should be relinquished; and small is that man's or woman's measure of real religion, who cannot make the sacrifice of an hour of vanity, for the sake of Christ, or the sake of a conscientious fellow Christian.

4th. Another evil, and the last I shall mention is, that this worldly conformity is absolutely forbidden in the scriptures.

"The book of God divides the inhabitants of the

world into two classes, which are described by various traits of character therein specified. The great majority called by way of emphasis, *the world*, are said to 'lie in the wicked one, to walk after the flesh, to follow the course of this world, to have their conversation in the lusts of the flesh, to fulfil the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and to be the children of wrath.' The minority who are chosen out of the mass called *the world*, are denominated 'children of light and of God.'—They are said to be not of the world, even as their Lord and Master was not of the world. They have their 'conversation in heaven, live in the Spirit, and walk in the Spirit.' They 'look not at the things which are seen and are temporal; but at the things which are not seen, and are eternal.' These, on account of the contrariety apparent in their spiritual manners, the world is said to hate.—They are accounted as its filth, and are a spectacle of astonishment and detestation to it. 'The world is crucified unto them, and they unto the world.' The things of the world, 'the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life,' are their enemies, against which they maintain an incessant state of hostility; and they are enabled, by 'believing that Jesus is the Son of God, to overcome the world.' Christ 'gave himself for them, that he might deliver them from this present evil world,' and through his grace, they 'deny ungodliness and worldly lust, and live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.' "

Says our Saviour "no man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Matt. vi. 24.—The Apostle Paul exhorts—"be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." Romans xii. 2.—Again, "ye are not your own, but ye are bought with a price, —therefore glorify God in your bodies and in your spirits which are his," 1 Cor. vi. 20; and to mention but one more, that singularly impressive declaration of the Apostle, "The love of Christ constraineth us, be-

cause we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead; and that he died for all, that they which live, *should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto Him which died for them and rose again.*" 2 Cor. v. 14, 15. This is a standard by which few professors at present I fear, would be willing to be measured.

But is it objected, to all this reasoning, that I would thus shut up all kinds of amusement from professing Christians. I answer, that the objection is entirely groundless.—I would not debar them from *all* amusements; but I would have them understand, what is meant by the Apostle when he says, "when I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man I put away childish things." This is precisely the situation in which a professing Christian is, or ought to be; and when he loves, and indulges in, worldly amusements, it is equivalent to saying—*I have sought for pleasures in religion, which I have failed to find;—and I have been obliged to turn again to the world.*—This is the language of the hearts of those who love the world and its vain amusements. But the real Christian has higher views; and even putting the experience of the happiness of religion out of the question, there are dignified enjoyments on the score of recreation, which belong to him.—There are the charms of literature and science—there are the delights of a rational and enlightened society—the pleasures of conversation—the endearments of domestic life; and an immense variety of social enjoyments, which, as sunbeams, are actually sent by the Creator to play amidst the clouds of life. Can the mere frivolities of pleasure be *necessary* for a *Christian*? Is it not in the power of religion to satisfy the minds of its votaries by affording them sufficient employment, and delight, but must they turn to the world for a supply which shall be ample I should blush for any one, who could make such a supposition. Can a real Christian, whose heart has been *changed* from the *love of the world*, and who in the face of his profession is supposed to "set his affections on things above," can such a one, I repeat, even enjoy the common amusements of the world, which are lighter

than vanity? If an individual takes pleasure in religion, I cannot suppose that he can mingle with satisfaction in those pleasures from which religion is studiously excluded; and no man is in his proper place when he cannot carry his religion with him. In the theatre—in the ball-room—at the card table, &c. *religion* finds no rest, but is like the Dove when first sent from the ark; and the professing Christian, who is to be found engaged in these, must of necessity bear about him no peculiar "mark of his high calling." If he does not put off his Sunday garments, he must cover them by ornaments, which shall totally disguise them. The pleasures of religion, and the pleasures of the world are composed of elements totally dissimilar. Suppose, for instance, that an individual, even before "mortal shall have put on immortality," should be admitted in heaven, and permitted to join in its hallowed employments—suppose that he should be welcomed, by angels and archangels, and learned to join in their strains of raptured adoration, which compose the songs of the redeemed—but I forbear to speak of these employments; "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered the heart of man to conceive,"—can it be supposed, that an individual, thus circumstanced, would be willing to leave that heavenly society, and those celestial employments, and descend to earth for the mere sake of mingling in its infinitely lesser enjoyments? Surely—surely not!—Abating the mere lesser circumstances of the case, the situation of a real, heart-changed Christian, resembles the supposititious case just put, and he who has "tasted of the precious gift of God," and experienced the joys of religion, cannot find pleasure in these inferior movements. There is an assimilating power in religion, which forbids this totally. Once let an individual have his heart really interested in religion, and I am persuaded that the danger is principally over, and I shall ever maintain this proposition, though it should wrench from the edifice of many a one's Christianity its foundation stone, that in the heart of a real Christian the empire of these follies is entirely overthrown. It would be almost as easy for me to suppose, that an angel from

heaven would come down to mingle, and to take delight in, the turmoils of the world, as I should of a decided follower of the Lord Jesus Christ "forsaking the fountain of living waters, to hew out cisterns which can hold no water;" for they who drink of that "living water" which Christ will "give" them, cannot—oh no!—they cannot quench their thirst at these shallow and polluted streams of worldly pleasure. To these latter the mass of mankind *bow down* to drink; and they rise with a thirst unsatisfied. With them is realized the declaration of the Prophet, "It shall even be as when an hungry man dreameth, and, behold, he eateth; but he awaketh, and, behold, he is faint, and his soul hath appetite."—Oh, "come ye out from among them, and be ye separate"—"touch not the unclean thing"—then, if your hearts are in the love and service of God, and your motives such as are produced by the Holy Spirit, with you shall be realized the declaration of the Saviour, "whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst, but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

I have thus endeavoured to give those reasons, which fully persuade my own mind that it is *absolutely inconsistent* for a *communicant* to join in what are called the amusements of the world.—Briefly enumerated, those reasons were—1st. A tendency to destroy personal religion.—2d. The danger of weakening the influence of religion in the minds of others.—3d. The danger of putting a stumbling block in the way of many, and giving unnecessary offence to the feelings and views of many of their conscientious fellow Christians.—4th. An absolute inconsistency with the word of God. I then entered upon the consideration, that engaging in these amusements could not, in the very nature of the case, be necessary to the happiness of a real Christian.—During the course of my remarks, I have noticed several objections, and have endeavoured to answer them.—There are others, of a lesser description, which can be but slightly touched on. Thus it is objected by one, that there is as much sin in attending to worldly business, or household affairs, or literary

pursuits, in an inordinate degree, as there is in going to these places of amusement. To this it may be answered, that to attend to these things, so as to infringe upon the duties which we owe to God, is positively sinful. But business, and household affairs, and the like, are *appointments of God*, in order that the *comfort and happiness* of ourselves and others, may be established. Theatres and balls, and the like, are *extraneous things, neither appointed of God, nor sanctioned by his word;* and are occasions of temptation, constituted by ourselves. There is consequently an intrinsic difference between the two; and though *excess* in worldly pursuits is sinful, yet worldly pursuits are necessary—and excess must be avoided; while the simple circumstance of engaging in worldly amusements is sinful, because worldly amusements, such as we have been reprobating, are *unnecessary and unauthorised.*—Others will object, that it is necessary to go to these places, with their sons and daughters, to introduce them into society, as it would be improper for them to go alone. This objection is futile, because two wrongs can never make a right; and it is to be feared that this is most generally used as a *cloak* to cover what they are ashamed to confess, their own wishes. Though I would confine my remarks to communicants, yet I cannot forbear to say, that I think this method of introducing sons and daughters into company, is not very much like the apostolic injunction to "bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord," nor does it particularly comport with what the wise man says: "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the light of thine eyes, *but know thou, that for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment.*

Another objection is, why we see a great many persons of unsuspected piety and high standing, indulge in these things, and even many who do not indulge in them, nevertheless publicly approve them. Am I to think such and such a person wrong, whom I have been led so much to respect, and look to? This appears to be formidable, because the objection has so

many examples to adduce. But the voice of many is always the voice of truth. It is indeed said that "ten men shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew" in the hope of safety; but there are very few persons in these days who can bear any more weight than their own sins. In the matter of salvation, I should not like to pin my faith upon the opinion or the example of any man; but go to the "law and to the testimony;" and the standard of what is to be done and what to be avoided, is not the conduct of a fellow being, be he ever so distinguished for private or public worth. It would be a sorry answer in the day of judgment to the question of the Judge—Why didst thou so? to say, I saw such a one do it, or I was encouraged by the advice of another. Let every one, I beseech you, look to it individually, and keenly consider the question, "When God riseth up what shall I say? and when he visiteth, what shall I answer him?"

I know, that in the foregoing remarks, I have laid myself open to much criticism and ridicule, and I have reason to believe, that for this, I may with as much truth be called a Methodist, as for preaching much about faith, the sole principle of our justification, I have been called a Calvinist. Thanks be to God I am neither frightened at the one nor the other. But that I may not stand charged with these frightful sins of opinion, without the benefit of good company, I mean to show that in these views, at least as far as theory goes, I am borne out by the General Convention of our Church, and by the pastoral letter of the house of bishops—and surely I shall be safe from the shafts of ridicule, and clear of the charge of methodism, and fanaticism, when I shelter myself beneath the wing of the venerable prelates of the Church.—I give, *verbatim*, the resolution of the house of bishops, sent to the house of clerical and lay deputies, and also the pastoral letter of the house of bishops:

Extract from the Journal of the House of Bishops.

Tuesday, May 27, 1817.—The House met. Present as yesterday.

"Resolved, That the following be entered on the

Journal of this House, and be sent to the House of Clerical and Lay Deputies, to be read therein:

"The House of Bishops, solicitous for the preservation of the purity of the Church, and the piety of its members, are induced to impress upon the clergy the important duty, with a discreet but earnest zeal, of warning the people of their respective cures, of the danger of an indulgence in those worldly pleasures which may tend to withdraw the affections from spiritual things. And especially on the subject of gaming, of amusements involving cruelty to the brute creation, and of theatrical representations, to which some peculiar circumstances have called their attention—they do not hesitate to express their *unanimous* opinion that these amusements, as well from their licentious tendency, as from the strong temptations to vice which they afford, ought not to be frequented.—And the Bishops cannot refrain from expressing their deep regret at the information that in some of our large cities, so little respect is paid to the feelings of the members of the church, that theatrical representations are fixed for the evenings of her most solemn festivals."

Extract from the Pastoral Letter for 1817.

"Both to the Clergy and to the Laity we desire to say, but most pointedly to the former, that the Christian profession exacts a greater abstraction from the world than that which consists in the abstaining from an acknowledged sin. There are practices so nearly allied, and so easily abused in it, that we conceive of a professor of religion in duty bound either not to countenance them in the least degree; or, as is allowable in regard to some of the matters contemplated, to avoid the so employing of time, and the so lavishing of affection, as puts into a state of sin, although not necessarily belonging to the subject. We would be far from an endeavour after an abridgment of Christian liberty. But we cannot forget, that in a list of the classes of evil livers there is introduced the description of persons who are 'lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God;' nor, in respect to the female pro-

fessors of religion in particular, the admonition, that 'she who liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.' We are aware of the difficulty of drawing the line between the use of the world, and the abuse of it; that being conceived of by different persons equally pious and virtuous, according to the diversity of natural temperament, and of the states of society in which they have been placed by education or by habit: but we know, that where the conscience can reconcile itself to the drawing as near to the territory of sin, as it can persuade itself to be consistent with the still standing on secure ground, deadness to spiritual good at the best, but more commonly subjection to its opposite, is the result.

"In speaking of subjects of the above description, we would not be understood to class among them any practice which is either immoral in itself, or so customarily accompanied by immorality, that the one is necessarily countenanced with the other. Of the former description, is gaming in all the variety of its exercise: and the like may be said of whatever involves cruelty to the lower animals of creation. If the same cannot be affirmed of works of fiction, and of putting speeches into the mouths of feigned characters, for the purpose of instruction or of entertainment; yet, as the question is applicable to the exhibitions of the theatre, such as they have been in every age, and are at present; we do not hesitate to declare unanimously our opinion, that it is a foul source of very extensive corruption.—We lay little stress on the plea, that it is a matter practicable in social institutions, to purge the subject from the abuses which have been attached to it. When this shall have been accomplished, it will be time to take another ground. But, in truth, we are not persuaded of the possibility of the thing, when we consider that the prominent and most numerous patrons of the stage are always likely to be the least disposed to the seriousness which should enter into whatever is designed to discriminate between innocence and guilt. While the opinions and the passions of such persons shall continue to serve the purpose of a looking-glass, by which the exhibited characters are

to be adjusted to the taste of so great a proportion of the public, we despair of seeing the stage rescued from the disgusting effusions of profaneness and obscenity; and much less of that mean of corruption, more insinuating than any other—the exhibiting of what is radically base in alliance with properties captivating to the imagination.

"While we address this alike to the Clergy and to the Laity, we consider it as especially hostile to the usefulness of the former. And even in regard to some matters confessed to be innocent in themselves, their innocency may depend much on many circumstances, and of professional character among others. The ear of a Clergyman should always be open to a call to the most serious duties of his station. Whatever may render it difficult to his own mind to recur to those duties with the solemnity which they require, or may induce an opinion in others, that such a recurrence must be unwelcome to him from some enjoyment not congenial with holy exercise, ought to be declined by him. If it be a sacrifice, the making of it is exacted by what ought to be his ruling wish, the serving of God, and the being useful to his fellow men, in the discharge of the duties of the ministry.

"With the assurance of our unceasing prayers for the welfare of our spiritual Zion, we conclude this, our fourth Pastoral Letter.

"Signed by order of the House of Bishops,

"William White, D. D., *Presiding Bishop.*"

I will, I trust, be excused, if I endeavour still further to strengthen my cause, by the following documents—

Extract from the Journal of the Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Diocese of Virginia, convened at Winchester, on the 19th of May, 1818.

In Convention, May 22, 1818.

"Whereas, differences of opinion prevail as to certain fashionable amusements; and it appears desirable to many, that the sense of the convention should be

expressed concerning them; the convention does hereby declare its opinion, that gaming, attending on theatres, public balls, and horse racing, should be relinquished by all the communicants of this church, as having the bad effects of staining the purity of the Christian character—of giving offence to their pious brethren—and of endangering their own salvation by their rushing, voluntarily, into those temptations, against which they implore the protection of their heavenly Father: and this convention cherishes the hope, that this expression of its opinion will be sufficient to produce conformity of conduct and unanimity of opinion among all the members of our communion."

The above is a true extract from the proceedings.

WM. MUNFORD, *Secretary to the Convention.*

"*Alexandria, August* 3, 1818.

"Right Rev. and Dear Sir,—Your favour has been duly received, and we now beg leave to reply to the questions therein propounded.

"There is, perhaps, no part of ecclesiastical polity, more difficult, than that which relates to the adjustment of the terms of communion. The colours of virtue and vice, like light and shade, run into each other in such a manner, that it can hardly be distinguished where the one ends, and the other begins.—There are many, even of those practices that are innocent in the abstract, which become criminal, by excess or other abuse; and to designate the precise boundary of their moral turpitude, is extremely difficult, if not impossible. The gospel itself has not undertaken to define the customs of every age, and the various influence which their diversified circumstances give them on morals and religion.

"But having specified the palpable instances of evil living, it provides for every doubtful case by some general maxims, in which we are commanded to "*abstain from all appearance of evil.*" Our reformers have not adapted a catalogue to the multiform practices peculiar to each age and state of society; but have contented themselves with the simple and general law of

the rubric. The church has, however, found it expedient in various ages to be more explicit, and to enact laws and to raise her warning voice against certain customs which, from a peculiar state of society, had acquired a necessary tendency to evil.

"The Episcopal Church, in several of the states, has passed canons upon this subject; and the last general convention adopted a resolution expressive of their opinion of the theatre and other fashionable amusements. The last convention of this state has also thought it expedient to pass a similar resolution in regard to gaming, horse-racing, public balls, and theatres.

"You require of us 'our opinion upon the extent to which these resolutions should operate, and whether the minister would be justified by the resolution of the state convention, or by that of the house of bishops, or by the rubric, in repelling those from the altar who occasionally frequent theatres and public balls?' We are of opinion, that the resolutions were never intended to have the operation of a canon; that they invest the minister with no power which he did not possess before, and that being merely recommendatory, they, of themselves, do not furnish ground for the process of expulsion. A simple resolution, even by the general convention, cannot invalidate the rubric, which is fundamental, and which cannot be altered, except by a proposition made at one general convention and ratified at another. Those who supported the resolutions disavowed the intention of giving them the operation of law. The question then, must be referred to the rubric. By this authority the minister is required to repel from the communion 'any whom he knows to be a notorious liver, or to have done wrong to his neighbours, by word or deed, so that the congregation be thereby offended.'

"The 6th canon of the church of this diocese, (Virginia,) has associated the vestry with the minister as his council to expound, and as a court to apply this law to any case which requires the exercise of discipline. It would, perhaps, be departing from the sphere assigned us, if we undertook to decide upon the merits

of the question before us. We cannot, however, for bear expressing the opinion, that, in the present state of society there are many circumstances unavoidably growing out of public balls and theatres, which render it advisable that 'they should be relinquished by all communicants.' In our judgment, an attachment to these amusements, is inconsistent with the spirit and character of a true Christian. Whether it would be proper to expel from the communion, those who occasionally attend them, is, however, a distinct question, and of this, the minister and vestry are the most competent to decide.

"Having an opportunity of knowing all the extenuating or aggravating circumstances of the case, they are able to analyze it fully, and to form a better judgment of it than they could do by any definition whatever. Excommunication is a solemn act, and should not be resorted to hastily. By the ancient canons it was not lawful to have any fellowship with excommunicated persons. It was the last resort of the church, and never adopted except in cases that had proved to be otherwise incorrigible, and always exercised with reluctance.

"When a man, by his example, encourages others to sin, and brings a stain upon the character of religion; when admonitions fail, and sufficient experience proves him incurable, it certainly is the duty of those whose office it is to guard the altar, to cut him off from the communion of the church.

"However painful the amputation may be, it is better to lose one member than that the whole body should perish. But there is manifestly a necessity for caution and prudence, lest one soul be lost, who by kindness and persuasion might have been reclaimed.

"Upon the whole, we indulge the hope that all the members of the church will unite in upholding the purity and dignity of her character, and that, whilst those who do not approve the resolution of the convention, will perceive in the check and provisions of the rubric and canon, that they have nothing to fear from the operation of an indiscreet zeal, and as good

subjects of government, will yield their private feelings to the delegated voice of the church; those also, on the other hand, who think it necessary to raise the character of the church, by a higher tone of discipline, will so administer justice as not to forget mercy.

"A firm and independent, yet a cautious and moderate policy, best suits the present state of our affairs, a policy which, while it wages extermination against notorious evil, fears also '*lest in gathering up the tares, it root up the wheat also.*' It is pleasing to discern, even in the warmth of religious disputation, the evidence of zeal for the cause of truth. While it shows what this zeal might do, when united and directed to one common object, it furnishes the highest inducement for so doing, drawn as well from this motive as from the consideration, that a fair opportunity is hereby offered, of achieving a noble victory over ourselves by learning to respect the motives of those who differ from us in opinion, and by consenting to merge all our differences in united and harmonious exertions to promote the kingdom of our Redeemer. By the blessing of God, upon such exertions, our church cannot fail to continue the career of prosperity, which heaven seems to have marked out for her in this country.—Does it not become all those to '*pray for the peace of Jerusalem? They shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls and prosperity within thy palaces.*'

"We are very respectfully, and affectionately, your friends,

"Wm. H. Wilmer,
"J. Dunn,
"Oliver Norris,
"Bush. Washington,
"Edm. J. Lee,
"George Taylor.

"*Right Rev. Bishop Moore.*"

The names attached to this latter document, will free it from every thing like suspicion, for three of the six, are from among the most distinguished *laymen* of the State of Virginia.

These documents are gathered from a little work, entitled "The Inconsistency of Conformity to the World with a Profession of Christianity."—It is the work of an English clergyman of distinction, (Biddulph,) but was republished in this country with the addition of these documents and many other valuable articles, under the direction of Rev. Wm. Hawley.—I would recommend this work to the serious attention of those who call themselves Christians.

As I now close my remarks, I feel under the necessity of apologizing for their length. I had hoped, to have been able to bring them into smaller compass. I feel, however, as if I had discharged a sacred duty—a duty which under my present circumstances, as editor of the Treatise on the Lord's Supper, I could not conscientiously have avoided. Many, no doubt, will remain unconvinced, by the reasoning employed, and many others, though perhaps convinced, will still cling to the world, and endeavour to quit their consciences by the vain and foolish attempt to accomplish an *impossibility*, viz. to reconcile the service of God and mammon. I rejoice in God, that I have been enabled, in public and in private, and in this essay to bear my testimony fearlessly, and yet I trust mildly, on the subject. As by my subscription list I find that this little book will be in the hands of nearly the whole of the communicants of my own church, there will be no danger that they should misunderstand me. The effect, I leave in the hands of that God, who can turn the weakest efforts to his glory, and my humble and my earnest prayer is that He may bless this effort so far as what has been written is agreeable to his holy will. If I know myself, I have no wish on these matters save that which may be accomplished in the advancement of personal piety, and the spiritual interests of the blessed Redeemer's kingdom. O may His "kingdom come, and his will be done on *earth* as it is in *heaven*."—G. T. B.

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